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THOMAS HOBBS



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THOMAS HOBBS

AS PHILOSOPHER, PUBLICIST  
AND MAN OF LETTERS:

AN INTRODUCTION  
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‘Que Locke me paraît diffus et lâche, la Bruyère et la Rochefoucauld pauvres et petits en comparaison de ce Thomas Hobbes.’  
—*Diderot: Œuvres*, ed. Assérat, XV, p. 124.

‘Vir emunctae naris.’—*Sorbière: Praef. in Op. Gassendi*.

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OXFORD BASIL BLACKWELL  
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PATRI SUO  
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PRIMITIAS





## PREFACE

THIS sketch was first written under the title of 'Thomas Hobbes as a Man of Letters,' being the Matthew Arnold Memorial Essay for 1921, and is now published with some slight additions.

An expanded and apparently more pretentious title has been adopted from a desire to set forth the catholicity of Hobbes' studies and to emphasize the fact that his title to fame cannot be baldly summarized in the phrase 'the author of the "Leviathan."' Even so, Hobbes is something more yet than a philosopher (natural and metaphysical), a publicist and a man of letters. He is also a theologian and withal the doughtiest exponent of a theory of the divine *modus operandi* which has never quite lost popularity from pagan times to the present day. Resembling in much that other great theorist of Authoritarianism, de Maistre, Hobbes unfavourably distinguishes himself from the protagonist of the ultramontane theory of sovereignty by failing to perceive that the problem of moral authority is more profound than that of political authority. His failure does but serve to shew that the problems of the English (Puritan) Revolution were, despite certain appearances to the contrary, less fundamental in the history of thought and religion than those of the French Revolution.

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My sincerest thanks are due to the Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford and to Dr. A. J. Carlyle, formerly Fellow of University College, Oxford, without whose encouragement I should not have ventured to publish this study; to Professor A. T. Baker, of the University of Sheffield, for guidance as to certain influences of Hobbes' ethical theories; and to Mr. H. W. B. Joseph, Fellow of New College, Oxford, for a multitude of careful emendations and very valuable suggestions.

It is almost superfluous to acknowledge my indebtedness to the classical works on Hobbes by Sir L. Stephen, Professor Croom Robertson and Dr. F. Tönnies. Other references are acknowledged in the text.

In conclusion, it may perhaps be considered a work of supererogation if attention be drawn to the fact that this sketch is, as the title states, an 'Introduction,' at least as much of the writer to the subject as of the subject to the reader.

*Oxford,*

*30th March, 1922.*

# *Thomas Hobbes as Philosopher, Publicist and Man of Letters: an Introduction.*

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## § I. HOBBS' LITERARY WRITINGS AND HISTORICAL OUTLOOK.

### *Introductory.*

**H**OBBS has been called an 'English Man of Letters.' The 'man of letters' is not thereby, *par excellence*, the literary man. Few words in a vocabulary renowned for its *nuances* of meaning are so latitudinarian as the expression 'a man of letters.' The title has come to be applied to the authors of *belles lettres*; rather to those who are masters of form than to those profound in content, has even degenerated into a term for nondescript literary dilettanti and writers of *chroniques scandaleuses*. If, however, the expression be contrasted with that of a 'man of action,' it comes to mean more than a literate, more even than a literary writer, it comes to imply those who have expressed creative thought, not in action but in writing. The distinction marks all the difference which exists between the luminous unoriginality of a Voltaire and the golden clouds of the Platonic fervour. If this latter valuation of the words be admitted, Berkeley, as man of letters, will rather be commemorated as the great English writer on Idealism than as the author of a charming treatise on the virtue of Tar-water; Hobbes will rather be portrayed as the renowned materialist than as the forgotten composer of the 'Marvels of the Peak.'

### *Sketch of Hobbes' Career.*

The Philosopher of Malmesbury was born in 1588, a premature child,—'twin brother of fear,' as he explains. Despite the parson of Westport's 'ignorance and clownery,' the wit of his son Thomas carried him to Magdalen Hall, Oxford, unlike the philosopher's nephew, 'who drowned his witt in

ale.' There Hobbes imbibed Aristoteleanism and some conception, as in his leisure hours he lay 'gaping on mappes,' of the new world lately dawned.<sup>1</sup> In 1607 he became 'page' to the first Cavendish Earl of Devonshire and companion to his son, and with this family he remained, except during short intervals, constantly connected. In these early days he seems, on occasion, to have acted as an amanuensis to Francis Bacon (1561-1626),<sup>2</sup> but a commendation for intelligence and perhaps a contempt for Scholasticism seems to have been the sole fruit of the acquaintanceship. A literary interest, which by 1634 made him a 'loving and familiar friend' of Ben Jonson and an acquaintance of Ayton, as it later brought him into touch with S. Butler, Waller, and perhaps Evelyn, led him to waste precious time in reading romances, being then also 'much addicted to musique and practised on the base-violl.' Repentant, and his mind broadened by journeys on the continent, in 1610 and 1629-1631, as tutor first to the second Earl of Devonshire and then to the son of Sir Gervase Clinton, he turned his attention to more serious things, the cultivation of a sound Latin style and, especially after his famous discovery of the cogency of geometry, in 1629,<sup>3</sup> to philosophy. His continental journey in 1634-1637 brought him to Florence where he met Galileo (1636), now on the point of publishing his 'Dialoghi delle nuove scienze' (1638), while his exile from 1640 to 1651 enabled him to compare thoughts with the best minds in Paris. Before the Restoration his fame and indeed notoriety were established. Probably after his third tour he came into touch with the Falkland group, including Hyde and Sidney Godolphin,<sup>4</sup>—to whom, as also to the famous physician Harvey, Hobbes was indebted for bequests,—although his acquaintanceship

<sup>1</sup> The education given at the English Universities at this time seems to have been one of a frayed pre-Renaissance Scholasticism spliced to Puritanism. The effect (Tönnies: *Hobbes Leben und Lehre*, p. 4) of these tedious years, at times enlivened by bird-catching, seems to have been to engender in Hobbes' mind a 'distaste for Scholasticism and orthodox theology while preparing him, by the logical discipline, to see in mathematics a new revelation. 'By God, is it possible?' he exclaimed of the 47th proposition; but the logic of *quod erat faciendum* was too strong for him . . .

<sup>2</sup> Probably in the time between Bacon's fall and death.

<sup>3</sup> For the date of Hobbes' early mathematical and philosophical speculations, cf. Prof. Croom Robertson: 'Hobbes,' pp. 31—5.

<sup>4</sup> The 'Leviathan' is in gratitude dedicated to his brother, Francis Godolphin.



with the brilliant Chillingworth (+1643) must date from before this journey. At Paris he found a patron in the Marquess of Newcastle, and temporary employment as mathematical instructor to Charles II. Returning from Paris in 1651, in 1653 he found an asylum with his old pupil, the third Earl of Devonshire (1617-1683). After 1675 he lived in retirement in the Cavendish household and died at Hardwick in 1679, still in full possession of his faculties.

## *Hobbes' Literary Work: Verse and Translations.*

Anyone who turns to Hobbes, looking to be charmed by the bland literary style of a writer who studies ἐς κάλλος γράφειν, will be disappointed. Hobbes is only at his best when he can find play for his volcanic manner and sulphurous satire. Warburton terms him 'one of the first men of his age for a bright wit, a deep penetration and a cultivated understanding.' The modern reader will, however, detect no preeminent merit in Hobbes' versified autobiography (1672, pub. 1681), Latin or English, nor in his early metrical praise ('not so obscene' though he thought it) of the Peak district (? 1636) and of Buxton Wells, to whose waters he supplies the testimonial:—

'Haec resoluta senum confirmat membra trementum.'

His early translation (*ante* 1628) of Thucydides, though simple and forceful, had as little regard for critical accuracy as had his late (1673-1675) verse translation of Homer, which latter Pope rejected with perhaps unmerited scorn, but which a recent literary critic has had to declare contains only two lines of true poetry in it.<sup>1</sup> The 'Thucydides' History' is chiefly remarkable as a sign of Hobbes' esteem for the aristocratic proclivities of that author, of whom Hobbes remarks, in his own verse biography:

'He says democracy's a foolish thing,  
Than a Republic better is one King,'—

which reputed sentiment gave 'the most politic historiographer that ever writ'<sup>2</sup> a propagandist value in Hobbes' eyes.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Craik: *Hist. of Eng. Lit.* Iliad VI, 400-1 (Grk.).

<sup>2</sup> Hobbes' *Eng. Works*, VIII, viii (quotations from Molesworth's edit. *Eng.* (E.) and *Latin* (L.)).

Hobbes wrote also, for the edification of his younger pupil, the third Earl of Devonshire, a book on the 'Art of Sophistry' (c. 1633), in which, that the unwary sophist might not be himself entrapped, an instance of false syllogism is given. It is typical.

'Every Puritan is a Christian,  
No lord Bishop is a Puritan,  
Therefore, no lord Bishop is a Christian.'

He further wrote for the edification of his ward a 'Whole Art of Rhetoric' (draft in 1633), a free translation of Aristotle's work, to shew

'by what Arts the Rhetor doth deceive those  
That are illiterate.'

For his Rhetoric and Poetics alone he commends Aristotle, for the rest 'il maestro di color che sanno' was 'the worst teacher that ever was ....., a country fellow, that could live in the world, as good.'<sup>1</sup>

### *Hobbes as Literary Critic.*

Hobbes plumes himself on being a literary critic, producing an essay prefatory to his own translation of Homer, 'on Heroic poetry.' Sir William D'Avenant's 'Gondibert' is an epic, prolix and of mediocre merit, by which the poet laureate hoped that 'princes and nobles should be reformed and made angelicall by the heroick.' Its chief virtue was the historical one of forming a stepping-stone to Dryden's verse style. But, however highly the 'vertues of a Heroique Poem,' educationally and ethically, may be estimated, one is hardly prepared for Hobbes' commendation of one canto, that 'there hath been nothing said of that subject' (of love) 'neither by the ancient nor modern poets comparable to it.'<sup>2</sup> However, Hobbes' justification of his criticism is unanswerable: 'I will take my liberty to praise what I like.' Hobbes hereon remarks that 'the glory of antiquity is due not to the dead' (the ancients) 'but to the aged' (the last comers, the moderns), but ordinarily in the famous literary battle between Ancients and Moderns, Hobbes is less favourable to these last.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Leviathan,' p. 79 (Everyman's Edition).

<sup>2</sup> E. IV, 451.

## STYLE

It must, in short, be admitted that Hobbes, though he made a translation of Euripides' 'Medea' into 'Iambiques' at the age of fourteen, had not a poetic soul nor even unfaltering literary judgment. He is yet here in front of his contemporaries and is the recognized founder of the school of poetical criticism which first clearly distinguished fancy and judgment, insisted on experience and realism, and based aesthetic on a rudimentary psychology. Herein he influences and is influential through his admirer Cowley.

But this 'great Columbus of the Golden Lands of New Philosophies'<sup>1</sup> admits that certain purely literary works, such as his 'Iliad,' were written in his spare time and old age, 'because I thought that it might take off my enemies from shewing their folly upon my more serious writings.' Hobbes' fame as a man of letters rests on far other things than these literary *hors d'œuvres*. In his more serious works he tells his readers, in apology for his style, that he 'consulted more with logic than with rhetoric.'

### *Hobbes' Style.*

His style shews much of that lucidity and conciseness for which it is praised by Hallam,<sup>2</sup> especially in his political and metaphysical works, but it is remarkable throughout for that vitriolic sarcasm which was his peculiar literary gift. For, as his enemies remarked, Mr. Hobbes was 'a witty man,'—although that, to be sure, was no virtue since, by his own shewing, such ebullient wit was merely a morbid excess of motion in the matter of the brain.<sup>3</sup> It would be possible to shew that this caustic style, which, to the reader, is first maliciously pleasing, then paradoxical and ultimately repellant, caused Hobbes to be regarded by those of his contemporaries who were possessed of a sense of humour as rather a species of philosophic Caliban, blown out for the amusement of more sane-souled mortals, than as a serious politician. It was for this acrid wit that Hobbes, 'irritabile illud et vanissimum Malmesburiense animal,' fell under the ban, much to the distress of his

<sup>1</sup> A. Cowley: 'To Mr. Hobs,' p. 189, Works C. U. Press.

<sup>2</sup> Hobbes' language 'is so lucid and concise that it would almost be as improper to put an algebraical process in different terms as some of his metaphysical paragraphs' (Lit. of Eur., p. 506).

<sup>3</sup> A point scored by Tenison: 'Creed of Mr. Hobbes examined,' p. 112.

admirer, Anthony à Wood,<sup>1</sup> of the great Dr. Fell of Christ Church (1625-1686)—but Dr. Fell had not a sense of humour.

A modern age, using its recently acquired knowledge in mental matters, may, on the other hand, see in Hobbes, himself accounted the founder of experimental psychology, a 'moral defective,' suffering from some nervous degeneration, shewing itself in misanthropy and a malignant wit, the causes of which searching psycho-analysis might reveal,—at least an explanation quite in accord with Hobbes' own determinist tenets.

*Hobbes' Method.* \*

It is important to note that Hobbes considers himself, not as the author of various unconnected works, ranging from history to mathematics and from the qualities of air to the theory of sovereignty or of the angelic nature, but as the exponent of a system which has the undeniable merit of being a harmonious whole.

His first extant manuscript production on philosophic matters (? 1630), the so-called 'First Principles,'<sup>2</sup> betraying a scholastic influence while improving on the scholastic theory of optical sensation, is followed by a further 'Tractatus Opticus' (Harl. 3360) and then by the 'Elements of Law,' in which already the logical framework of later work is clearly noticeable. His physiological interests are apparent; from his 'Optics' he will develop his 'De Homine' (1658); his 'Elements of Law' is divided into sections 'Concerning men as persons natural' and 'Concerning men as a body politic.'

In Hobbes, as the natural philosopher, is to be remarked the inductive scientist, though never entirely inductive, like Bacon, but with a theoretic hypothesis to start. Here he is the follower of Galileo and of his own close friend, Gassendi. But in politics, as in ethics and metaphysics, Hobbes is deductive and dogmatic,<sup>3</sup> the contemporary and rival of Descartes. It will later be pointed out that the fine flower of Hobbes' political system is empirical and utilitarian, but this is grafted on to an abstract and absolute stem. Every-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Historia et Antiquitates' (1674), p. 449.

<sup>2</sup> Harl. 6796, cf. F. Tönnies: Elements of Law, Pref.

<sup>3</sup> The principles themselves, however, were 'sufficiently known by experience' (E. II, xx.).



## HISTORICAL SETTING

thing is to be demonstrated, and, for Hobbes, demonstration implied a proof which the author at least had satisfied himself was of mathematical precision. In the introduction to his book 'De Cive' (1642) he boasted that, of all that followed, the preeminence of monarchy alone was 'not to be demonstrated but only probably stated.'<sup>1</sup> Of natural bodies the construction could only be judged inductively from the effects, but civil philosophy, like geometry, could be demonstrated because it had its cause within itself.<sup>2</sup>

### *Hobbes' Historical Setting.*

It would be a mistake to imagine that the *raison d'être* of this system is to be found in English political conditions in the early years of the Civil War. In the introduction to his 'Philosophical Rudiments concerning Government and Society' (1651; an English edition of the 'De Cive'), Hobbes declared that he had planned a systematic exposition of philosophy in three parts, of Body, of Man and of Civil Government. In all this Hobbes no more than anticipated the equally mathematically-minded Spinoza (1632-1677); Euclidian demonstrations were in the air. The circumstances indeed of the Civil War led so far to a modification of his original design as to result in the publication of his political work 'De Cive' first.<sup>3</sup> The 'Human Nature'<sup>4</sup> appeared in 1650, both being extensions of the two parts of the 'little treatise' of 1640, the 'Elements of law natural and politic,' which had been hastily prepared for private circulation. The 'De Corpore' appeared last, in 1655, the work which was perhaps the most laboriously composed by its author and is the least valuable to the present day student.

### *The Civil War and the 'Livres de Circonstance.'*

This independence being established, it must yet be conceded that, in more respects than one, theory was the late-born child of fact. The 'Behemoth' and, still more obviously, the 'Considerations on the Reputation, Loyalty, Manners and Religion of Mr. Thomas Hobbes' (1662) are *livres de circonstance*, self-justificatory and of the nature of

<sup>1</sup> E. II, xxii.

<sup>2</sup> E. VII, 184.

<sup>3</sup> Hobbes fully appreciated and reproached himself for this inconsistency (Epistolae S. Sorbrière, quoted Lyon: Phil. de Hobbes, p. 212).

<sup>4</sup> An extended Latin version, 'De Homine,' appeared in 1658.

an apologetic for his more controverted works such as the 'Leviathan.'

Owing to his fundamental conviction that 'a coercive power' is necessary to security, a coercive power which for him must needs be tantamount to absolutism, Hobbes' inevitable attitude on the outbreak<sup>1</sup> of civil war was that of a royalist (not a fighting Cavalier but a man of letters and polite reputation), nervously anxious that the powers that be should protect him against unmannerly hot-Gos-pellers and fanatic ruffians.

That part, however, of discretion which lies in silence was temperamentally impossible for Hobbes, and his manuscript treatise of 1640 raised such a storm against him that he was, in his own estimation, in danger of his life. The Short Parliament having been dissolved, before the Long Parliament could assemble, Mr. Hobbes,

'Stocked with five hundred pounds of Coin,  
Did desert or leave' his 'native shore.'<sup>2</sup>

### *Events and 'Behemoth.'*

When the Restoration came, it was necessary for Hobbes to demonstrate his fervid loyalty by sharpening his pen yet more against his already defeated Republican adversaries. 'Behemoth: A History of the Causes of the Civil War in England' (wr. 1668, pub. 1679 and 1682) was the work whereby he hoped to render himself this service, this being a partizan but able description of the Civil Wars, in which the hypocrisy of those 'seducers' who claimed to be 'God's ambassadors,' was aptly disclosed, and the House of Commons 'of the right English temper,' their parsimony and the absence of patriotism by which they ruined the government of the King, the wrangling and ineptitude by which they wrecked their own, were described in a narrative eminently readable. Cromwell, though treated with respect, was, of course, portrayed as aiming at the crown. 'He called a Parliament and gave it the supreme power to the end that they should give it to him again. Was not this witty?'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> His prejudices are clear since the publication of the 'Thucydides,' the 1640 tractate apart.

<sup>2</sup> Life of T. H. (edit. 1680).

<sup>3</sup> E. VI, 390 (Tönnies edit., p. 181). Written in 1668, the King banned its publication, along with other controversial writings of this ageing *enfant terrible*. Published, *ipso inconsulto*, 1679, authorized 1682.

## EVENTS AND 'BEHEMOTH'

At an earlier date, in his 'Revision' appended to the 'Leviathan,' Hobbes had deemed it advisable to add to the Laws of Nature implanted in the reason of every man, one to the effect that 'we ought to defend that power by which we have hitherto been protected.'<sup>1</sup> His 'Behemoth' marked a determined endeavour to bind up the 'Leviathan' theory of sovereignty—a theory by no means irreconcilable with the strong rule of an Oliver—with the cause of loyalist legitimism. The Protectorate bore a too twinlike resemblance to the true Leviathan;<sup>2</sup> it was, therefore, to be damned with the abusive title of 'Behemoth' and, false Dagon overthrown, Leviathan, the 'god upon earth,' was to be raised above reproach. Thus the identification by Hobbes of absolutism and the Stuart cause receives an historical explanation.

### *'Considerations concerning the Reputation, Loyalty, Manners and Religion of Mr. Thomas Hobbes.'*

It had not always been so, and Hobbes, to rebut the charges of being a Roundhead, had full need of his mother-wit in its proper capacity of preserving him from danger. These charges were chiefly based, however, on passages favourable to Independency in the self-same 'Leviathan' which certain critics charged with being an eleventh hour attempt to commend himself to the King.<sup>3</sup> In his 'Considerations' about his reputation, written against Wallis (1662), he declares that 'he was the first that had ventured to write in the King's defence' and 'the first of all that fled'; he was, also, though he had here the precedent of his own pupil, the young Earl of Devonshire, not the last of those who returned. In 1647 he had discovered with vexation that the Elvezir press, at Leyden, had published, as a frontispiece to his new book 'De Cive,' a portrait of himself described as tutor to the Prince of Wales. He protested that he was not tutor but merely a casual instructor

<sup>1</sup> 'Lev.' (Everyman's Edition), p. 386.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. VII, p. 5-6 (Ep. ded. to Charles II) wherein Hobbes, having excused himself as a philosopher from any direct concern with matters theological, 'for religion is not philosophy but law,' apologizes for his 'Leviathan,' and begs the king not 'to think every man is bound . . . to protect in Warre, the Authority, by which he is himself protected in time of Peace?'

<sup>3</sup> 'Lev.' op. cit. p. 380; a copy was presented to Charles on his return from Worcester by which time Hobbes was already unpopular at St. Germain's. Cf. *infra*.

in mathematics to the younger Charles, and he foresaw that such publicity would quite prevent his return to England, 'nec cur redire non velim, si liceat, quomodocumque pacatâ Angliâ, non video.'<sup>1</sup> As he says in his autobiography: 'Then I began to ruminate on Dorislaus' and Ascham's fate.'<sup>2</sup> Having ruminated, he departed.

He could well plead that 'Leviathan' had roused the anger of the Parliamentarians and was written three years (1650, pub. 1651) before Oliver's advent to the Protectorate. Financial considerations, his serious illness in 1651,<sup>3</sup> and fear of the French Clergy, may also have conduced to bring him home. The fact remains that, even before the publication of 'Leviathan,' he was in exceedingly ill-odour with the councillors at the exiled court of St. Germain. A presentation of a copy of this work to Charles, after his return from the battle of Worcester, though inscribed on vellum in 'a marvellous fair hand,' failed quite to mend matters. In 1652, a staunch royalist, Sir Edward Nicholas, writes to the future Clarendon: 'All honest men who are lovers of monarchy are very glad that the King hath at length banished from his court that father of atheists, Mr. Hobbes,' and later, to Lord Hatton, declares: 'Mr. Hobbes is in London, much caressed as one that hath by his writings justified the reasonableness and rightness of their' (the Parliamentarian) 'arms and actions.'<sup>4</sup> A later writer, T. Dowell (1683, in the 'Leviathan Heretical') even goes so far as to state that Oliver had 'proffered him the great place of being secretary.'<sup>5</sup>

*Royalist and Parliamentarian but no Turncoat.*

Though the accusation of playing turn-coat may be as false as that of atheism, and spring from mere personal dislike, yet Hobbes' refusal to distinguish between *de facto* and

<sup>1</sup> 'I teach mathematics, not politics' (letter of 4th Oct., 1646, given by Tönnies: 'Leben,' p. 29.)

<sup>2</sup> Ambassadors of the Protectorate, recently assassinated.

<sup>3</sup> During this illness Hobbes threatened suicide, but this apparently was regarded as *en règle* for an Englishman. The French physicians ascribed this propensity to the English climate. It was during an earlier illness, that of 1648, that there were vain hopes that Hobbes would exchange the Church of Laud for that of Richelieu.

<sup>4</sup> Archiv f. Gesch. d. Phil. 1889-90, iii. F. Tönnies p. 199 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Tönnies considers this very doubtful. But the 'Mercurius Politicus,' published 'with authority' gave long extracts (2nd and 9th of Jan., 1651) from 'De Corpore Politico.' (Tönnies' edit. 'Elements of Law,' Preface, xi.)



## THEORY OF 'LEVIATHAN'

*de jure* government permitted him, in 1651, to return to England, prudently reporting himself, as no spy, to the powers that be.

Chivalrously but fruitlessly to disturb the Commonwealth by hopeless royalist risings appeared to Hobbes both uncongenial and unintelligent, and by 1656 he could complacently pride himself on having retained a thousand gentlemen in conscientious loyalty to the government of the day. Although Hobbes had a sincere enough contempt for democracy,—'impudence in democratic assemblies doing almost all that is done',—and was filled with venom against priestly power or those who 'speak by inspiration, like a bagpipe,' although Long Parliament and Presbytery were anathema, Cromwell, had he succeeded dynastically, would have been Hobbes' ideal, an ideal the more perfect because Hobbes thought him, like Machiavelli's Prince, a very skilful hypocrite. Nor would it have been logically possible for Hobbes to have entered a '*distinguo*' on the ground that Cromwell was a tyrant, for he declares elsewhere that tyranny is not a diverse state from legitimate monarchy.<sup>1</sup> In this, Hobbes' writings are revolutionary documents.

### *History and The Theory of 'Leviathan,' Tudor and Lay.*

But if the transition from the unbending theory of the 'Leviathan' to the partizanship of the 'Behemoth' be historically explicable, no more is the theory of the 'Leviathan' itself ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, ἀγενεαλόγητος.

The rising Nationalism of the XVIth century saw the gradual breaking away, from the discipline of the Universal Church, of states which had in no way departed from the religious attitude of the Universal Church—the insistence that the true faith was one.<sup>2</sup> What has been termed the Caesaro-papalism of the 'Christian Republic' gave way to the much less commendable Papalo-caesarism, veiled or avowed, of the Erastian New Monarchies. Sword and Keys were unblushingly wielded by the same hand and the divine right of the successors of Peter was met by the divine right of the upstart progeny of the Empire. In order that priests might be better

<sup>1</sup> E. II, 94.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Erastus:—'unam religionem eamque veram.' 'Erastian' is used in the text popularly (cf. Figgis: Divine Right of Kings, p. 293 ff.)

taught to mind the affairs of God, religion was made an affair of state. This process, half-conservative, half-revolutionary, although long attacked in Catholic countries by the Jesuits, had gone far before enthusiastic Protestants generally realized what was meant when the State, loudly proclaiming the sole lordship of Christ over the Church, modestly reserved for itself the earthly Headship or Governorship. The result of this disillusionment was the renewed militancy of Presbyterianism and the rapid growth of Brownism. This anti-secular reaction, gathering force under the weaker rule of the Stuarts, provoked not so much by the pious Charles as by the busy Laud, found its voice among the Parliamentarians in the Presbyterian objection to lay control and the Independent objection to all control of conscience. Theory evoked counter-theory. The exposure of the 'Stumbling-block' of Calvinism by the redoubtable Peter Heylin and (long after the Act of Appeals and the train of historic fact which produced it) the 'Leviathan' appeared, the latter a manual, though out of season, to the court of Henry VIII but a scandalous book to the Laudians and withal no recommendation of the exiled Charles II to his bereaved subjects.

Hobbes is in line with the secular school of the Imperialists, classic and Christian, and of Nogaret and Du Bois, of Marsiglio and Bodin. Moreover, he may not have been uninfluenced by the theological 'divine-right' school of Wm. Barclay (+ 1608) and James I. But, although suspect by some (Tönnies: 'Leben,' p. 32) of being a picker up of unacknowledged trifles, Hobbes' political doctrine is to a singular degree his own, derived from an experience which knew the France of Ravaillac and the England of Fawkes, Pym and Lilburne, the France of Richelieu and the England of Strafford, Cromwell and the Restoration. 'Had I studied books as much as other men, I had known no more than other men.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hobbes was in France in 1610, in May of which year Henry IV was murdered by the apparently uninstigated act of the fanatical Ravaillac. The odium fell on the Jesuits who, however, had refused to admit Ravaillac to their Society and had (the French Province, in 1606) formally repudiated Mariana. Mariana (+ 1624), whose book 'De Rege' had been dedicated to Philip III of Spain, suffered for certain writings imprisonment by the Inquisition and was found later to have written against his own Society. Nevertheless this nexus of Henry IV and the Jesuits may in part account for the reference in 'Behemoth' (ed. Tönnies) p. 46. Cf. for Protestant Nonconformity, p. 25.

# CALVIN AND BELLARMINE

## *Calvin and Bellarmine.*

It is, therefore, by no accident that extremes met and that Hobbes found arrayed against him the original Papists, champions of Bellarmine (later to become, in the person of Arlington, half friends), the newest Protestants, followers of Calvin or sympathizers with Baxter, and, midway between the two, the Bishops, jealous of their peculiar office but nervously afraid lest their beliefs should smell of Popery. The 'Leviathan' is, then, if a little inopportune, at least redolent of its own age, like the 'Politics' or 'De Regimine' or 'Prince' before it, while it is, also, a polemic treatise in a dispute lasting from Suarez (if not Marsiglio) to Hoadley or the Disestablishment Acts. In the fierce Toleration contests of the early XVIIIth century some wit did not fail to produce (1710) a pamphlet, introducing Hobbes' name, entitled 'Advice from the Shades Below by Th. Hobbes to his brother B... n H... y.'

## *Influence on Hobbes of the Thought and Discoveries of the Century.*

Before passing to review the systematic works of Hobbes, a third historical nexus must be remarked, the broadest of all, the influence of the *Zeitgeist* upon him. Hobbes not only engaged, rather ambiguously, in the battle of books between Roundhead and Cavalier, engaged with all his soul in the literary fight of the advocates of Church and State, but was also a prominent member of the little Parisian coterie which was revolutionizing the deeper thought of Western Europe. It comprised chiefly the acquaintances of P. Marin Mersenne, including the *littérateur* Sorbrière, most vociferous but least weighty, de Roberval, the academician, Gassendi (1592-1653) and Descartes (1596-1650).

Hobbes takes a prominent place in this group. The tale of his apparently real affection for Mersenne, the Franciscan champion of Descartes, and of his respect for Gassendi, priest, physicist and philosophic Epicurean, 'the sweetest natured man in the world,' is amongst the most pleasing parts of his autobiography. While at Paris, in 1636, and, later, during exile,

'Here with Mersennius I acquainted grew,  
Shewed him of Motion what I ever knew;  
He both Praised and Approved it and so, Sir,  
I was reputed a Philosopher.'

Although Hobbes was perhaps, as Descartes thought, a better political philosopher than metaphysician or poet, although he prepared the political coping stone of his system before cutting the blocks of its naturalistic foundations, yet those foundations are always presumed and Hobbes is incomprehensible unless his fundamental materialism be remembered.

*Materialism.*

This materialism was the order of the day. Although Descartes was a contemporary,—the founder of modern subjectivist philosophy, who is responsible for the fact that an epistemology forms the prologue if not the substance of every modern philosophy,—yet even Descartes did not fully perceive the force of his own observations and his expounded system is essentially mechanical, just as his earliest interests are chiefly those of a physicist. The older scholastic philosophy was for the moment put out of court by a heady empiricism. Peter Lombard and Duns Scotus are dismissed by Hobbes as ‘two of the most egregious block-heads in the world.’ ‘When the nature of a thing is incomprehensible,’ he adds, ‘I can acquiesce in the Scriptures but when the significance of words is incomprehensible, I cannot acquiesce in the authority of a Schoolman.’<sup>1</sup>

The supersession of the Ptolemaic theory, the advance in astronomy and physics, the ‘Dialogues’ of Galileo, even the discoveries of the despised Ward,<sup>2</sup> all conjoined to impress on men’s minds the magnitude of the material universe and to put into their hearts the triumphant sense of having found a natural and rational explanation of it all—the mechanical laws of motion.

The influence of Tycho Brahe<sup>3</sup> (1546-1601), Bacon, Galileo (1564-1643), Toricelli (1608-1647), Harvey (1578-1657), Gassendi, all tended in the same direction. ‘Matter and Motion,’ ‘what kind of motion it was that produced the sensation and imagination of living beings,’ were the subjects of Hobbes’ meditations in Italy in 1636.<sup>4</sup> So, too,

<sup>1</sup> E. IV, 314.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> An astronomic discoverer. In his relation to the Copernican system he is, however, reactionary.

<sup>4</sup> Already, in the ‘First Principles,’ a mathematical manner of demonstrating ethical propositions is utilized, which bears a strong similarity (? direct connection) to that of Spinoza.



Spinoza (1632-1677) a little later devotes much of his 'Ethics' in working up the mechanical and geometrical consideration of matter into a worthy philosophical system. Such a preoccupation was the inevitable result of the giant strides of geometry, mechanics and their kindred sciences. It is not, therefore, surprising that Hobbes, the first systematic philosopher since Cusanus, quite unconstrained by that desire to accommodate the Catholic tradition which provoked the Cartesian dualism, should have made all his system start from the thesis that only Matter is.

## § 2. HOBBS' PHILOSOPHICAL WRITINGS.

### *Hobbes as Physicist: The Controversy with Rob. Boyle.* \*

It is impossible here to enter into Hobbes' researches into physics or into his disputes with Robert Boyle as to air-pumps or the theory of cold.<sup>1</sup> It would be unprofitable to discuss in full his adventures in mathematics. As to optics, in which science, like Berkeley, he was interested, with his customary diffidence he claims that 'if it be true doctrine, I shall deserve the reputation of having been the first to lay the grounds of two sciences; this of Optiques, ye most curious and yt other of Natural Justice, which I have done in my book De Cive, ye most profitable of all other.'<sup>2</sup> Anticipating Newton (1642-1727) he endeavoured, in 1661, to explain the principle of gravitation, which he did on the hypothesis that lighter bodies were more readily thrown off from the surface of a rotating globe by centrifugal force and denser bodies, conversely, returned more readily—a doctrine of which the corollary seemed to be that gravitation was non-existent at the poles.

### *Hobbes as Mathematician: The Controversy with Ward and Wallis.*

In pure mathematics he aimed at higher things, the squaring of the circle and the cubing of the sphere (1669). In his famous controversy with the 'egregious' Savilian Professors of Geometry and Astronomy, each party was

<sup>1</sup> Vide the 'New Observations and Experiments touching Cold' (1665), by R. Boyle.

<sup>2</sup> E. VII, 471.

besprent by the other with invective, but Hobbes was easily without rival in the use of obscene abuse.<sup>1</sup> Both Wallis and Ward (+ 1689, as Bishop of Salisbury) were men of mature reputation, the one, the pioneer of the differential calculus, the other, an expositor of Kepler and a rival of Boileau; but Hobbes is beside himself with rage against Wallis, 'believing that since the beginning of the world there has not nor ever shall be so much absurdity written in geometry as is to be found in those books of his.'

Unfortunately, despite the 'insufferable ignorance of the puny professor,' Hobbes' exercises only served to exhibit, in the words of a modern critic,<sup>2</sup> his mathematical imbecility. In fairness to Hobbes it must be said that he had taken up exact mathematical studies late in life and, long after Wallis had withdrawn from the weary controversy, Hobbes staunchly kept on, till the 'Decameron Physiologicum' (1678) was published by him at the ripe age of ninety. Hobbes had, indeed, no small mathematical reputation in his own French circle, Sorbrière considering him better than Descartes,<sup>3</sup> whom Hobbes himself thought better employed as a geometer than as a metaphysician.

It is more important to note that Hobbes could say, with Descartes, '*toute ma physique n'est autre chose que la géométrie.*' He ignores the distinction between pure and applied mathematics and makes these former the fundamental laws of a material universe, mechanically conceived. The axioms of Euclid he thinks to be falsely so called, being themselves demonstrable.

### *Hobbes' Metaphysic and Theology.*

The subject matter of Philosophy, for Hobbes, is 'every body of which we can conceive any generation ... composition and resolution.'<sup>4</sup> While admitting the ideality of space and of time, 'the phantasm of before and after in motion,'<sup>5</sup> while contending that the accidental lies not in the object but in the percipient subject—the manner of our

<sup>1</sup> E. VII, 332, 427, IV, 440.

<sup>2</sup> Dict. Nat. Biog. art. 'Hobbes' by L. Stephen; F. Tönnies is less severe.

<sup>3</sup> F. Tönnies: 'Leben' p. 203, 205.

<sup>4</sup> E. I, 10.

<sup>5</sup> E. I, 95.

## METAPHYSIC AND THEOLOGY

conception of a body<sup>1</sup>—Hobbes' universe entirely comes within the terms of extension. It has no room for a vacuum; it admits of no final causes. God, though demonstrable by natural reason, is merely the First Cause. Although compared by Dryden to Lucretius, Hobbes is yet no consistent atomist,<sup>2</sup> but he is a thorough Materialist.

He distinguishes between primary and secondary qualities and defines corporeal substance as 'substance that has magnitude.' Playing on the old Greek semi-materialism of his critics, he defies them to distinguish between 'infinitely subtle substance'<sup>3</sup> and mere phantasm or, alternately, matter.

It may be well doubted whether, whatever its logical consequences, the belief that the sole essence was extended matter, was tantamount in Hobbes' opinion to Atheism, any more than was Spinoza's belief in a *tertium quid* atheistic. He dexterously escapes from Bramhall's dilemma that, with his tenets, he must either consider God as *Natura naturata* or as 'a fiction of the brain, without real being, cherished for advantage and political ends, as a profitable error, howsoever dignified with the glorious title of the "eternal cause of all things."'<sup>4</sup> For Hobbes the transcendental personality of Deity is as real as Hobbes' own personality—no more. He has 'the being of a spirit, not a spright, an infinitely fine spirit and withal intelligent,' able to change all species and kinds of body as He pleaseth, somewhat, as Hobbes naively illustrates, as a mineral water may change ordinary water white where no whiteness was before. God is, indeed, corporeal and infinite, is extended, has parts,—'for certainly he that thinks God is in every part of the church, does not exclude him from the churchyard.'

Apart from such cogent argument, although the charge of atheism or of disloyalty or of both occurs in most of the treatises written against the philosopher of Malmesbury, the first charge must rather be considered a popular one, although sufficiently serious to induce him in his later years to a punctual attendance at the Cavendishes' private chapel.

<sup>1</sup> E. I, 76.

<sup>2</sup> L. I, 262 ff, cf. Lange: Hist. of Materialism, § iii, ch. 2.

<sup>3</sup> E. IV, 312.

<sup>4</sup> E. IV, 311-2.

*Atheism and the Great Plague: The  
'Narrative concerning Heresy.'*

After the Fire of London, indeed, and the Plague, matters seemed more serious. A cause for these must be found and, to the popular mind, none better seemed to be forthcoming than the atheism of Mr. Thos. Hobbes. A committee was to sit on his doctrines, and Hobbes was forced in haste to produce a tract 'Concerning Heresy' (1667, pub. 1680) to prove that he could not legally be burnt. It is significant that the quotation from Lucretius begins the work:—

'Sic nos in luce timemus

Interdum, nihilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam  
Quae pueri in tenebris pavitant finguntque futura.'

The only practical result was an order from Charles II not to publish 'Behemoth,' 'Concerning Heresy,' the 'Ecclesiastical History' nor his latest reply to Bramhall.<sup>1</sup>

The apostle of conformity as the only virtue, he could not yet, even under the influence of fear, bring himself to attend the parish church; the contents of the sermons he knew already. It is comforting, however, to reflect that he considered the Bible, as interpreted by Charles II, his 'bishops and other subordinate ministers,' a salutary book, which as his editor<sup>2</sup> informs readers, was 'writ by a sort of innocent, harmless men.'

*Hobbes as Psychologist: the 'Human Nature.'*

✓ If there is only matter, psychological effects must be physically accountable, and this Hobbes, who has been termed the first experimental psychologist,<sup>3</sup> encouraged by Harvey's recent discoveries, proceeds to do in his 'Human Nature' (to which Seth Ward, still his friend, is said to have written the preface) as also in other books. The 'internal

<sup>1</sup> Charles II granted Hobbes in 1660 a pension of £100 a year (Tönnies: op. cit. p. 58) and caused his portrait by S. Cooper to be hung in his own cabinet. King and philosopher saw much to admire in each other: they had so much in common.

<sup>2</sup> One John Davis of Kidwelly, whom Hobbes states to have pirated the yet unpublished 'Liberty and Necessity' (wr. 1646, pub. 1654). Much else that this editor says, though it cannot be laid to Hobbes' account, is a most interesting impression of the unguarded opinions of a Hobbist.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. Balz' instructive essay (Studies in the Hist. of Ideas, edit. Dewey).



parts only motion contain.' Sense he defines as motion in the internal sensible parts stimulated by the motion of the external object, or, rather, a clash between the invading motion and the outward-tending resistance of the organ. There are no 'visible species,' no playing of the object on the optic nerve and 'making the soul listen to it and other innumerable such trash.'<sup>1</sup> Light, for example, is a fancy in the mind caused by motion in the brain. Memory is a continued dull reverberation of this motion gradually fading and decaying away. The mind is, as it were, like a camera; granted that the instrument is in order, the impressions are left with infallible exactitude, though they may fade or grow confused with time. There is no separate soul immaterial but a 'corpus subtile et fluidum,' which is further defined as 'materia subtilis.'<sup>2</sup> In Hobbes' psychology there is the germ of the later Lockeian sensationalism but, though not here so widely divorced from Descartes,<sup>3</sup> he still remains a rigid mechanical materialist.

Hobbes, now, has to deal with the difficult problem of reason, of abstract ideas. If matter is the only substance (and substance he has defined as that which 'is material, subject to accidents and changes'),<sup>4</sup> then is rational thought an accident of it? Despite his faulty psychology based on a metaphysic which has never, as his critic Descartes pointed out,<sup>5</sup> thoroughly examined the relations between substance and accident, Hobbes does not lack boldness. 'We compute,' indeed, 'nothing but our own phantasms.' But these phantasms (and all ideas are such images) are the work of the imagination or of perception, and thus in direct line of causation with the external world. These images are corrected the one by the other, the irrational by the rational, that is, by the mathematically justifiable. Body is that which, coextensive 'with some part of space,' has no dependence on our thought, but it is yet arrived at by sensation corrected by reason.

<sup>1</sup> E. VII, 469. Hobbes himself had not left this theory behind in the *Tract. Opt.* (Harl. 6796).

<sup>2</sup> Latin W. V, 283.

<sup>3</sup> 'Nam quos hic nomino spiritus nil nisi corpora sunt' (Cartesius: *De Pass.* X).

<sup>4</sup> Descartes: *Works* (trad. Ross and Haldane) II, 71.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 65 ff.

*Hobbes' Doctrine of Ideas: The Controversy with Descartes*

But Hobbes must grant that this reason is itself sensation. And this he does, for he explains that by ratiocination he means 'computation' and, to confound his readers the more, adds that ratiocination is applied, not only to numbers and to magnitudes but also to actions which may be added and subtracted. Hobbes' psychology, had he possessed the data, would have out-distanced Wundt in mathematical statistics. In short, ideas are optical sensations, images, which may be changed by the addition of new images or modified by a subtraction due to motion in the mind. Abstract thoughts are audile sensations—names—either sheer *flatus vocis*, like 'essence,' which 'is no part of the language of mankind but a word devised by philosophers out of the copulation of two words,' or 'marks,' memorials of a past sensation.

With Hobbes' notions, Descartes, who had been provided by Mersenne with that philosopher's criticisms on his own works, naturally came into collision. Hobbes' obstinate refusal to accommodate himself to Descartes' use of the word 'idea' ('the pentagon not as the object of the imagination but as the object of the understanding') rendered much of his critique fruitless. In his 'Objections to the Meditations' (1641) Hobbes urged that there is no reason for saying that 'I am exercising thought, hence I am thought';<sup>1</sup> to say that the understanding is the soul and understands, is like saying that the walking faculty walks.<sup>2</sup> Reasoning depends not upon some spiritual substance but on names, names on the imagination and the imagination on the motion of the corporeal organs. There are no innate ideas and the multiplication of superlatives does not prove the Creator's existence, much less that the work of Creation is His.

To this Descartes could only reply that to admit that we arrive at the soul by reason is to admit an idea of it. Hobbes, again, contradicts himself, since he admits that the existence of God as First Cause is known by natural reason, and is just such an ideal necessity as Descartes contends. But it suits Hobbes to make all knowledge of God, 'who is incomprehensible,' depend on Revelation, and the interpre-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* II, 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* the notorious 'dormitive virtue' of opium.

## DOCTRINE OF THE WILL

ption of this again upon the civil power; as Sir L. Stephen puts it, 'Charles II apparently was to decide whether the world had a beginning.'

The outlook of the two philosophers was so different, Hobbes, though more courteous than usual, was yet so Philistine and dogmatic, that it is not surprising that the result of the correspondence was not to leave them on the best terms. Hobbes suspected Descartes of trying to steal his own philosophy of motion. Descartes wisely judged it better to have no further dealings with a man of such a temper.<sup>1</sup> Descartes committed himself to dualism; Hobbes persisted in unqualified materialism, of which the *arcana sacra* were Motion and Impact.

### *Hobbes' Doctrine of the Will: Controversy with Bramhall.*

As an inevitable consequence, Hobbes is led to the denial of Free Will and to the long controversy with Bishop Bramhall of Derry. One of Hobbes' patrons, to whom he dedicated the 'Elements of Law,' was the Cavendish Marquess of Newcastle, the remarkable husband of a more remarkable wife. At his table, during the Paris exile, Hobbes met many of his French friends; here, too, he met Bramhall (+ 1663, as Archbishop of Armagh). Hobbes' thesis was published, without his knowledge, as the 'Liberty and Necessity' (1654)<sup>2</sup> and subsequently defended, against Bramhall's replies, in the 'Questions' (1656), the 'Answer to Bramhall's "Catching of Leviathan the Great Whale"' (imprimatur refused by Charles II, 1667, publ. 1682) and, later, in the 'Letter to the Duke of Newcastle' (1676, against Laney, Bishop of Ely).<sup>3</sup>

Hobbes decided to make an example of some of his adversaries and, 'first, of this bishop.' The controversy was conducted with the customary acrimoniousness. Though the Bishop concludes his first treatise with a sanctimonious 'So God bless us all,' Hobbes is not to be baulked of something to take exception to, and rebukes his lordship for 'a buffoonly abusing of the name of God to calumny.' As to the subject of dispute,

'He the Schools followed, I made use of sense,  
Whether at God's or our own choice we will.'

<sup>1</sup> L. Works V. 298.

<sup>2</sup> The authorized 'Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance' (1656), is an elaborated defence.

<sup>3</sup> This work, mentioned by Blackburne, is not extant.

In the XVIIth century the doctrine of Free Will, confronted by Calvinism and afraid of being accused of the heresy of Pelagius, had less undisputed mastery of the field of orthodoxy than at present. But if Hobbes works out the logical implications of Calvinism against Arminianism, he does so in the interests not of theology but of a consistent materialism.

Hobbes does not deny human liberty but declares that it 'doth not consist in determining itself but in doing what the will is determined unto ... no man can determine his own will for the will is appetite.'<sup>1</sup> Freedom for Hobbes, then, is the objective liberty to execute the decisions of the will, not a freedom to decide what those decisions are to be. Such a freedom both men and animals have but, for Hobbes, neither are free from necessity. To the objection that, although the alternatives before the understanding are determined, men have freedom to defer a decision, to hold in suspense the fiat of the will, Hobbes replies that while the vicissitude of appetites and aversions remains in them, they have 'that series of thoughts which is called deliberation,'<sup>2</sup> 'the efficient force however of their appetites is extrinsically determined.'

Determinism ostensibly follows for Hobbes from the omnipotence of God; therefore it cannot be immoral. To say with Suarez, 'If man wills, then God concurs,' is to subordinate the Deity. Does God then cause us to sin? At least God does not punish hereafter, that is, not eternally; also he afflicts the creatures that cannot sin. 'That which He does is made just—that is, in Him—by His doing it,'<sup>3</sup> for power irresistible justifies all actions,—defines what is justice. He might act like an enemy and destroy us, *Deus homini lupus*. 'Say not then it is through the Lord I fell away'—that is *lèse-majesté*. It does not follow that we may not think it. The ground, indeed, of worship is a respect for Omnipotence; for, were there two Omnipotents and were man one, Hobbes would not care to answer for his obedience. It follows that the obligation of obedience is by reason of weakness, and worship is a means of confessing inferiority; by this means the Deity 'may acquire as many as possible either through love or fear to be obedient to him.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. V, 34.

<sup>2</sup> E. I, 408. Cf. the thesis of Fr. J. Rickaby, S.J. on Free Will.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Dean Mansel's doctrine.

<sup>4</sup> E. II, 213.



p *Hobbes' Doctrine of Punishment: the Philosophy of*  
 tl *Fear and Power.*

e This bizarre doctrine, not without anthropological justification, put forward especially in the 'De Cive' (Latin, 1642) or 'Philosophical Rudiments,'<sup>1</sup> contains implicitly Hobbes' doctrine of Punishment, set forth, *inter alia*, in the 'Leviathan.' The punishment of sin is not the self-induced evil effect of an evil act, following according to immutable law. 'Punishment is for a terror.' Omnipotence gives absolute right to punish but it is expedient that this should not be arbitrary but a deterrent example—a psychological motive having a specific force. With Dostoieffsky, Hobbes believes that 'science has taught us that it is criminal to be humane.' Humanitarianism is a crime against the efficiency of the sovereign, leaving men without sufficient cause to be obedient. That the criminal is an automaton is no defence. 'We destroy, without being unjust, all that is noxious, both beasts and men.' 'The cause,' he says in the 'Human Nature (1650),' 'of appetite and fear is the cause also of our will: but the propounding of rewards and punishments is the cause of our appetite.'<sup>2</sup>

In this book Hobbes becomes the Philosopher of Fear. His determinism colours not only his theory of punishment but his whole doctrine of conation. All action requires an efficient cause and the strongest of all efficient causes is fear. Since sufficiency is more necessary than repletion—the absence of pain, of bodily injury, than the presence of happiness, of bodily pleasure—therefore the feeling of fear rather than its complement, the desire for power, is the dominating sentiment in human nature. 'Will to do is appetite and will not to do is fear.' Will to do is the desire for power,<sup>3</sup> which by some strained analogy seems to be linked in Hobbes' mind with the power exercised by motional impact—the will-to-power of a destined Napoleon resembling the onward force of one of his own cannon-balls.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sect. on 'Religion,' the other two sects. being 'On Liberty' and 'On Dominion'; also in the works on 'Liberty, Necessity and Chance,' etc.

<sup>2</sup> E. IV, 69.

<sup>3</sup> 'The object of man's desire is ... to assure for ever the way of his future desire.'

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 'First Principles' (ed. Tönnies, p. 209):—'Good is to everything that which hath power to attract it ... agrees well with Aristotle who defines Good to be that to which all things are moved, which hath been metaphorically taken but is properly true.' This in c. 1630!

*J. Eachard.*

The will not to do is the fear of power in others. The object of knowledge is also power. As John Eachard (+ 1697, Master of St. Catherine's Hall, Cambridge) says, in his shrewd and humorous critique: 'Power. A most excellent thing! I know nothing like it but the Philosopher's stone: for it does all things and is all things, either at present or heretofore or afterwards.'<sup>1</sup>

*Hobbes' Ethics.*

Hobbes deplores that hitherto Ethics has been an unwieldy subject, unlike geometry, because it is not 'certain and well-demonstrated,' and proceeds to supply the defect in the sections on morals in his 'Human Nature, and 'Leviathan,' as well as by the allusions in his 'Rhetoric.' Having established that 'there is no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense, for motion produceth nothing but motion,' he adds that in moral philosophy we consider the motions of the mind, and 'the reason why these are to be considered after physics is that they have their causes in sense and imagination which are the subject of physical contemplation.'<sup>2</sup>

His famous description of gratitude as thanks for a present benefit coupled with a lively anticipation of good things to come, may appear a mere extravaganza; it is indeed part of a consistent system of conduct 'reduced to the rules and infallibility of reason.'

*The Philosophy of Selfishness coloured by Servility.*

Self-interest is the only guide of conduct; 'everyone calls that good which he desires and evil which he eschews.' Having disposed of pity, which is assigned as the quality of the most compassionate and 'such as think that there be honest men,' charity is next explained. 'There can be no greater argument to a man of his own power, than to find himself not only able to accomplish his own desires but also to assist other men in theirs.'<sup>3</sup> But the name of this jejune virtue must not be applied to the more purely self-respecting

<sup>1</sup> J. Eachard, Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge: Mr. Hobbes' State of Nature Considered, p. 19, 1671; another tract pub. 1673.

<sup>2</sup> E. I, 72.

<sup>3</sup> E. IV, 49.

attitude towards strangers and foreign states, which stand to each other in the posture of gladiators.

No doubt there is much in this which, as Pufendorf (1632-94) says of Hobbes' works as a whole, 'etsi quid profani sapiat, sed arguta est et satis sana.'<sup>1</sup> One perceives that SS. James and Stephen must have suffered martyrdom from the higher valuation which they set on joys immortal. It is explicable, again, why soldiers often run away in the hour of battle and do so 'non iniuste,' being seduced by their temperament. Hobbes perhaps fails to explain why any should remain behind. The definition of anger may, however, be herein helpful, as 'pleasure proceeding from the imagination of revenge to come,'<sup>2</sup> conjoined with desire of this revenge and grief at being crossed or treated with contumely.

One learns that all the pleasure and jollity ('for jesting is witty contumely')<sup>3</sup> of the mind consists in getting someone, with whom comparing, 'it may find somewhat wherein to triumph and vaunt itself.' There is no restriction on this vaunting of one's own power, save fear of the power of others. Thus the acknowledgment of power human is called 'honour': '*d'avoir tué son homme*,' Hobbes aptly exemplifies. Power divine is honoured by 'piety.'

Love, in the narrower sense, is naturally self-interested (and Platonic love one suspects is indeed *cupido*). Affection is felt by parents for those 'who adhere to them.' As for the honouring of parents, save as an outward acknowledgment of their rash beneficence in not making away with one at birth, it must decrease in proportion as one grows in stature.

### *Hobbes' Ethics answered by the Cambridge Platonists.*

This system of egoistic ethics, naturally assailed in many quarters by writers whom, despising, Hobbes let alone, 'as he does Dr. Wallis, Mr. Baxter (+ 1691), Pike and others,' was denounced most weightily by the circle of scholars and philosophers known as the Cambridge Platonists. Besides the numerous hostile allusions in Henry More's works, Cudworth, (1617-88, Master of Christ's College, Cambridge) while

<sup>1</sup> 'Elementa Jurisprudentiae Universalis,' Pref. quoted L.I. lxxvii, in Blackburne's Auctarium.

<sup>2</sup> E. VI, 452.

<sup>3</sup> E. VI, 467.

not honouring Hobbes by specific mention, attacks him and 'the Atheists dabbling in physiology,'<sup>1</sup> through the ancient Epicurean and Atomist Philosophers. In his 'Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality,' he is concerned to deny Hobbes' position—'regulas boni et mali...esse leges civiles,'<sup>2</sup> and that omnipotence, whether in God or Government, and not his 'Intellectual nature' constitutes man's reason for obedience, or that civil government is 'the ignoble and bastardy brat of fear.'<sup>3</sup> Cudworth's disciple, Clarke, propounds this objection in the form of a dilemma. What should be our conduct towards the Devil, were he omnipotent?

Cudworth attacked the root of all Hobbes' theories, his materialism, with the argument of the need for a first efficient cause; this attack Clarke (1675-1729) carried further, in his Boyle Lectures for 1704-5, shewing that Hobbes must hold ('unless intelligence differs from matter only as Circle and Triangle') that all matter as such is endued with 'thought,' though without organs,<sup>4</sup> for either matter has or has not unknown non-mechanical qualities.

Perhaps the most telling criticism was made by Cumberland,<sup>5</sup> Bishop of Peterborough, the least intellectualistic of the group, when he denies that man, even in a universe such as Hobbes constructs, would be a completely unsociable animal. Blind sociability, not a calculating misanthropy, is the natural instinct.

*The Psychologist psychologised: Personal Characteristics.*

Hobbes had a great opinion of his own Ethics.<sup>6</sup> In 'Behemoth' he tells us that 'the rule of just and unjust, sufficiently demonstrated and from principles evident to the meanest

<sup>1</sup> 'Intellectual System,' II, 273.

<sup>2</sup> De Cive, ch. XII. § i.

<sup>3</sup> 'Intellectual System,' II, 469.

<sup>4</sup> Clarke: 'Discourse concerning the Being and Attributes of God,' Works (1738), II, 546.

<sup>5</sup> 'De Legibus Naturae Disquisitio Philosophica' (1672.)

<sup>6</sup> The ethical opinions current in the Paris *salons*, shortly after Hobbes' last French visit, are shewn by the following extracts from La Rochefoucauld's *Maximes supprimées* (wr. ante 1665): 'Toutes les passions ne sont autre chose que les divers degrés de la chaleur et de la froideur du sang' (ed. Mignet, p. 87) ..... 'Le premier mouvement de joie que nous avons du bonheur de nos amis ..... c'est un effet de l'amour-propre, qui nous flatte de l'espérance d'être heureux à notre tour ou de retirer quelque utilité de leur bonne fortune' (p. 89) ..... 'On ne blâme le vice, et on ne loue la vertue, que par intérêt' (p. 91).



## ORIGINS OF SOCIETY

capacity, have not been wanting; and, notwithstanding the obscurity of their author, have shined, not only in this but in foreign countries, to men of good education.' Before passing on, two examples may serve to demonstrate the intimate relation between Hobbes' principles and his personal psychology, which is a mark for the jests of Tenison, Eachard and others of his critics.

It is significant that when teaching Wallis good manners, Hobbes lets drop that, in praising his book 'De Corpore' ('though it be little, yet it is full, and if good may go for great, great enough'), 'he that thinks this to be ostentation or self-conceit, is little versed in the common actions of human life.' Hobbes, again, was generous, his private estate he made over to his brother. He was not unaware of the fact, and comments as follows:—

'I slight Reproaches, when  
I know I'm Good, from other (*sic*) Black-mouth men.  
None but the Covetous we wicked call.'

Similarly he played the part of peacemaker in the Cavendish family and is careful to state in writing that he had neither required to be nor, in fact, had been paid for his good offices.<sup>1</sup> But to decide whether Hobbes was tainted with moral imbecility or was merely a trenchant humorist is beyond the scope of this 'Introduction' even were the psychological data extant.

### § 3. HOBBS AS THE AUTHOR OF 'LEVIATHAN.'

#### *The Problem of the Origins of Society.*

Hobbes' delineation of social relationships is thrown out of perspective by his mechanical prepossessions. His State, despite the human form of Leviathan (an idea in which he had been anticipated, and which is not yet developed in the 'Elements of Law'), is not truly organic but artificial. His problem is to bring into a common life a multitude of men whose only common qualities are self-seeking and suspicion.

<sup>1</sup> In 1639 (*cf.* Tönnies, *Leben*). His analysis of his motives for almsgiving are of interest in view of recent judicial dicta: 'it gives me pain to see the pitiable condition of the old man and my alms, which make things a little lighter for him, relieve me this pain.' Interesting also is his declaration (E. VII, p. 467, Ep. ded.) that to ask of inventions or new knowledge what it is good for *i.e.* worth in money, is to shew oneself not so far removed from brutality.

Hobbes does not minimize the difficulty. While putting 'for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire for power after power, that ceases only at death,'<sup>1</sup> he makes the work of union yet more stupendous by adding that 'men have no pleasure but a great deal of grief in keeping company, where there is no power to overawe them.'<sup>2</sup>

Although Hobbes modestly excuses himself in 1646, 'doceo enim mathematicam non politicam,'<sup>3</sup>—the mathematicians being those who passed from low and humble opinions, evident to the meanest capacity,—he yet claims that civil philosophy is no older than his book 'De Cive' (1642). As for 'Leviathan' (1651)

"tis hoped by me  
That it will last to all Eternity.'

Civil philosophy, Hobbes held, might be reached either by the synthetical method or by analysis of experience; it seems unjustifiable, therefore, to conclude with Professor Croom Robertson that his political theories have little connection with his *a priori* principles. While Hobbes happens to have produced his chief works in the exactly opposite chronological order to their logical sequence, and while he sanely admits the appeal to experience, Hobbes' system is very much of a consistent whole, and owes its force and its errors to that fact. He himself says that in writing of justice and 'policy' it is necessary, so to speak, to trick the reader by putting down 'such principles for a foundation as passion, not mistrusting, may not seek to displace,' and then to build 'till the whole have become inexpugnable.'<sup>4</sup>

—and of the State: The State of Nature.

It is not proposed to consider in detail Hobbes' State of Nature, a condition the existence of which he confesses to be immaterial to his argument. To picture a *primaeval Lex Regia* is but a realistic method of illustrating the

<sup>1</sup> E. III, § xi.

<sup>2</sup> Glumplowicz (Gesch. d. Staatstheorien, sub titulo) aptly quotes Cicero:—  
'Non est enim singulare nec solivagum genus hoc (humanum)' (de Rep. I. 25).

<sup>3</sup> F. Tönnies, op. cit. p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> E. IV, dedication.

## ORIGINS OF THE STATE

argument.<sup>1</sup> If Hobbes believed more, he was behind his contemporaries, since, for Lawson, it was only a 'Utopian fancy.' It suffices to remark that Hobbes holds that anarchy is the condition out of which ordered society was evoked, that this condition of *homo homini lupus*, which Hobbes' psychology supposes to be natural to man, is one into which society may always return, and that the threat and inconvenience of this condition make coercive government, absolutism, tyranny, tolerable and preferable. Despite Hume and Austin, none knew better than Hobbes that contracts without the sword were nothing worth. There was no vicious circle of contract enforced by Law of Nature and Law of Nature by Civil Sovereign in Hobbes' theory, as Cudworth and Clarke thought; not a Law of Nature and the pious obligation of a contract but bloody anarchy was Hobbes' sanction for social order. Other writers before and after were to make of the theory of social contract a Cave of Adullam, an asylum from the powers that be; Hobbes makes it a portico to the House of Rimmon, on which is inscribed 'Obedience.'

### *Sir Robert Filmer.*

Despite a cumbersome method and plentiful references to Adam, as first father, and to Nimrod, as first king, Sir Robert Filmer (+ 1653) blunders upon the root of the matter, in his 'Observations concerning the Originall of Government' (1652), when he fixes on Hobbes' Ishmael society<sup>2</sup> of every man's hand against every man, each individual 'all of a sodaine sprung out of the earth like mushrooms,'<sup>3</sup> as being the core of his error. Hobbes can only escape with dignity by such a magnifying of the *patria potestas* as was unknown even to Sir H. Maine. His rationalistic and little reverential mind rejects Filmer's own conclusion of the patriarchal power and divine claim of Kings by right of genealogy, of which Locke was to expose the anomalies.

<sup>1</sup> The Classical *lex regia* and even the Tudor 'lex regia' (Stat. of Proclamations) were doubtlessly clearly before Hobbes' mind in his sketch of monarchy.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'The Original of all great and lasting societies consisteth not in the mutual good-will men had towards one another but in the mutual fear they had towards each other ... if they fight, civil society ariseth from the victory, if they agree, from their agreement.'

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from 'De Cive'—'*more fungi.*'

But he concedes that solitude is an enemy to man<sup>1</sup> (not that man is a lover of his neighbour; all is extrinsic, there is no instinct), that a son is never in a state of nature to his father,<sup>2</sup> that the family may grow up into a hereditary Kingdom,<sup>3</sup> that 'institution' by contract is not the only means of constituting government. This, however, is all by reason of self-interest or superior force, and between these small groups 'the private sword' is not sheathed. He admits that Nature dictates the seeking after peace, but it is 'Nature red in tooth and claw,' not the Aristotelian φύσις of man.

*The Law of Nature: Robert Sharrock.*

✓ With Grotius (1583-1645) writing, the doctrine of the Law of Nature was much in the air: its development, independently of the fostering Papal system, was rendered necessary and urgent by the horrors of the Wars of Religion. On the whole, Hobbes was in hearty agreement with such Philistines as J. Selden (of whom scandal said that 'he was at heart an infidel and much inclined to the opinions of Mr. Hobbes') and greatly admired the latter's 'Mare Clausum' (1636).<sup>4</sup> Hobbes, however, admits Laws of Nature—'to do unto others as one would be done by,' to keep contracts, to be grateful, to make ourselves useful. The Laws of Nature are, indeed, the dictates of reason, identical with the moral law and the 'law of Christ'; not a law properly so called but rather 'qualities disposing to peace.'<sup>5</sup>

But the fundamental Law of Nature is 'to seek peace where it may be had, and where not to defend ourselves': 'the sum of virtue is to be sociable with them that will be sociable and formidable to them that will not.'<sup>6</sup> It follows and must be remarked that, in the 'state of nature,' the secondary 'Laws of Nature' are not operative, but are active only in the social condition, where there is security from others of their observance. *Inter arma silent leges.* In the

<sup>1</sup> E. II, 2.

<sup>2</sup> E. II, 10 n.

<sup>3</sup> E. II, 121.

<sup>4</sup> To which Grotius replied with the 'Mare Liberum.'

<sup>5</sup> *Vide* Leviathan ii, § 26.

<sup>6</sup> E. IV, 110.



## THE LAW OF NATURE

state of nature, irresistible might is right and nothing is unjust. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues. But 'covenants of government without power of coercion are no security' and hence the civil laws arise. The civil law might, indeed, contradict<sup>1</sup> the natural law, but in practice such an *impasse* cannot arise, since the sovereign, which is answerable for its action to God alone, is the sole interpreter of Natural Law.

In this denial of a Law which rises august above all peoples and sovereigns, Hobbes is coupled with Pufendorf (1632-1694) and Spinoza by the outraged Sharrock (Fellow of New College) who contends with Cicero and the Greeks—as well as with the Scholastics—for a natural obligation to the offices of humanity.<sup>2</sup>

### *Doctrine of Sovereignty: Calvin and Cardinal Bellarmine.*

Since there is no such distinguishing diversity of strength among men that the weakest cannot kill the strongest, since, as to intelligence, the 'coarser wits' generally prevail, and since none will admit himself the inferior of another, all men—and women—are by nature equal and there are no natural rulers nor any natural order.<sup>3</sup> To procure social security it is necessary that all should totally renounce every private right, including property. Life only is (to Filmer's disgust) reserved from this renunciation, since the commonwealth is called into existence specifically to preserve life. In union the right of all men is conveyed to one, whether individual or assembly: 'every man giveth their common representative authority for themself in particular,' and this one man or assembly reduces all their wills and plurality of voices to one will or voice. This autocrat 'beareth their Person.' It is to be observed that this covenant is made, by each with his fellows, with the intent to form a protective society within which each may pursue his own avocations. It is not contracted, as in the

<sup>1</sup> E. IV, 140.

<sup>2</sup> R. Sharrock: 'De finibus et officiis secundum Naturae Jus' (1682), § ix, also p. 126, etc. For the Ciceronian doctrine cf. especially de Legibus, II, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle's doctrine of an aristocracy of race and of culture is laconically given its *congé*. 'I know that Aristotle in the first book of his Politics for a foundation of his doctrine maketh men by nature, some more worthy to command, meaning the wiser sort such as he thought himself to be for his philosophy: others to serve' ... (E. III, p. 140).

Mediaeval theory, with the ruler to secure thereby good government (like an employer with his swineherd to mind the swine, *i.e.* the vile concerns of this life, as said Manegold of Lauterbach). This was a theory which, like those, as was alleged, of Calvin and Bellarmine, 'looked asquint'<sup>1</sup> at a deposing power. The sovereign is necessarily absolute, unbound by compact, *legibus solutus*, no ghost of ancient Rome but Caesardom itself, 'that Mortal God, Leviathan.'

To Hobbes undoubtedly belongs the credit of having established, following in the wake of Jean Bodin, a sound doctrine of legal and political sovereignty. But he then proceeds to elaborate his theory ethically in a manner which, suitable to the idealist system of a Rousseau, is quite unsuitable to Hobbes' naturalistic Utopia of selfishness in equilibrium.<sup>2</sup> Hobbes developed a doctrine of a representative will in his 'De Cive,' 'De Corpore Politico' and 'Leviathan,' the conclusion of which is that there can be no right or indeed claim of the subject against the sovereign. 'Whatsoever the sovereign doth do is unpunishable by the subject: because if the subject punish him, he punisheth another for his own actions' (an inadequate reason, be it added, according to the Hobbesian ethics).

*George Lawson.*

To this, the most lucid of his critics, Lawson,<sup>3</sup> well replies that the sovereign was set up to act justly and thus the people are not the author of his unjust actions, and, he adds, 'quis judicet judices?' What Hobbes indeed means

<sup>1</sup> Filmer: Patriarcha (pub. 1680). Cf. 'Lev.' (ed. Routledge) pp. 383-409 and 484.

<sup>2</sup> Hobbes' conception of the State is one of something static and mechanical. State and Individual everlastingly confront each other: churches, unions, corporations are something anomalous. He studies the *corpus politicum* as a matter of physics, not of physiology, still less of psychology. Thus, with a different emphasis, his State tends to be that of the Manchester School and the financier: the Greek conception of unselfishness and the Ciceronian-Mediaeval one of functioning members in a vast society fitly joined together, is missing. Despite the frontispiece of 'Leviathan,' Hobbes does not take very seriously the rather obvious organic analogy which is to be detected in Plato (Laws, XII §964, trans. Jowett, p. 356) in Livy and in St. Paul, which may be traced through John of Salisbury, Cusanus and Hobbes' contemporaries, and which has more recently been taken seriously by Spencer and Shäffle. Hobbes sees only the many-minded multitude, not the nation inspired by a social mind. (Janet: Science pol. et mor. ii, p. 159).

<sup>3</sup> G. Lawson: 'Examination of the Political Part of Leviathan' (1657). (Rector of More, Salop).

## SOVEREIGN AND EXECUTIVE

is that the state alone has the authority to decide what is just, that it has the power of enforcing its view on the minority and that the majority can scarcely refuse to acknowledge their own actions or those of their representatives to be well-considered and just.

*Sovereign and Executive: Hobbes and Locke.*

Having established the absoluteness of sovereignty, to the alarm of the followers of the admirable Falkland (+ 1643) and the upholders of Church, State and moderation, Hobbes proceeded to confound the anarchy resulting from the dissolution of society with the changes consequent on modifications in government, and to identify the absolute sovereignty of the prevailing public opinion<sup>1</sup> with the actual and practical sovereignty of the executive.

In civil society a certain agreement on fundamentals is a pre-condition of government and it is not surprising that Hobbes imagined that he saw in the England of the Civil War, when academic quarrels—'private opinions obstinately adhered to'—and fanatical religious disputes were being imported into the realm of civil administration, the spectre of social anarchy walking abroad. He did not live in the spacious times after the Glorious Revolution, when Locke could reassure his readers that 'People are not so easily got out of their old forms.'<sup>2</sup>

Hobbes, for partizan purposes, was willing to deny that, in England, the legal sovereign was in fact divided or was other than the titular sovereign: he ridicules the hypocrisy of demanding the surrender of royalist towns in the name of King and Parliament. 'Division of sovereignty either worketh no effect to the taking away of simple subjection or introduceth war, wherein the private sword has place again.'

*Hobbes and Coke: 'Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Law.'*

The sovereign is legislator and as such may revoke laws. The pretensions of the Common Law judges provoked Hobbes, encouraged by Aubrey, to one of the latest of his outbursts, the Dialogue on the Common Laws (wr. c. 1667,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hume: Essays, i, 109. 'Force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion.' But cf. p. 57, n. 1, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> Wks. V. p. 471.

publ. 1681). Of Sir E. Coke's Institutes he declares: 'Truly I never read weaker reasoning.' The irrelevances of the proof texts nauseate him, for Coke 'meant none of this but intended (his hand being in) to shew his reading or his chaplain's in the Bible.' The claim to administer the laws, coming *ὑψίποδας δι' αἰθέρα*, and divorced from the profane administration of state, meant indeed the endeavour of the judges to make themselves the ultimate referees in questions of law. Shrewdly Hobbes turns the argument of the lawyers against themselves. 'But you know that in other places he' (Coke) 'makes the common law and the law of reason to be all one; as indeed they are. Why, by it is meant the King's reason.'<sup>1</sup>

### *Monarchy and Tyranny.*

Hobbes' preferences for monarchy are unconcealed. The necessity for monarchy he does not consider to be logically proved but democracy he considers an 'aristocracy of orators'<sup>2</sup> and those the most ignorant and boldest.<sup>3</sup>

Should such a misfortune occur as that a democracy should come into existence, he makes provision for its speedy demise. It cannot remain in existence unless there be specific provisions for the meeting of the national assembly and as to time and place. Otherwise the government, which the democracy has appointed and which has the power of issuing writs or withholding the writs for a fresh assembly, is sovereign and 'the democracy is annihilated and covenants made unto them void.'

So, too, of elective Kingship, 'if he that is elected, by the advantage of the possession he hath of the public means, be able to compel the people to unity and obedience, he hath not only the right of nature to warrant him but the law of nature to oblige him thereunto,' as the champion of

<sup>1</sup> E. VI, 125. Cf. Harrington:—'Your lawyers, advising you to fit your government to their laws are no more to be regarded than your tailor if he should desire you to fit your body to his doublet.'

Hobbes' theory (unlike the Old Testament-Mediaeval one of contract of ruler and ruled) is essentially a Roman Law theory, with the saving philosophical principle of Equity minimized. It is the theory of the military Caesars and of the Bonapartes. The source of authority is the people, an amorphous congeries of humanity, represented by the genius of one man, and *quod principi placuit legis habet vigorem*. But Hobbes prefers to tumultuous elections hereditary monarchy.

<sup>2</sup> E. IV, 141.

<sup>3</sup> E. VI, 18.



## MONARCHY AND TYRANNY

government against anarchy.<sup>1</sup> A limited monarchy Hobbes forcefully points out is *contradictio in adjecto*: such a monarchy means that either the monarch is merely an honourable minister of state or else he is an absolute monarch miscalled.

The yoke of democracy is heavier than that of a monarchy, for, in a democracy, men give counsel 'which is never without aim at their own benefit or honour; every man's ends,' adds Hobbes reflectively, 'being some good to himself.'<sup>2</sup> As for the evils of a regency or minority, why then is the very hey-day of democracy.<sup>3</sup> Either way the people rule, for in a democracy 'particulars contract with particulars to obey the people—the people is obliged to no man'; 'even in monarchies the people commands, for the people wills by the will of one man.' 'And in a monarchy, the subjects are the multitude and (however it may seem a paradox) the King is the people'; to excite sedition against him is to 'stir up the multitude against the people.'<sup>4</sup>

### *The Republicanism of the XVIIth Century not Democratic: Milton, Harrington.*

In his suspicion of popular government, in his sometime favour for the mighty rule of the Lord Protector, Hobbes is not so widely separated from the evangelical Baxter with his small esteem for the unregenerate rabble, 'the Damn-me's,'<sup>5</sup> from such a rigorous Republican as Milton, who still preserves the scholastic prejudice for election by the '*pars melior et sanior populi*,' or from the author of the 'Oceana.' Milton in his political writings is disappointing; Harrington, the believer in a conservative polity of yeomen and small squires, is the only English contemporary who is worthy of comparison with Hobbes as a political philosopher.

A republican by inclination, Harrington was yet thought 'to have swallowed many of Hobbes' notions'; his worship of the strong man, his declaration that 'a parliament of physicians could never have found out the circulation of the blood nor would a parliament of poets have written Virgil's "Aeneis,"' his interest in the distribution of power,

<sup>1</sup> E. IV, 145.

<sup>2</sup> E. IV, 167.

<sup>3</sup> E. II, 141.

<sup>4</sup> E. II, 158.

<sup>5</sup> Camb. Mod. Hist., art. by the Master of Balliol.



even his preference for liberty of conscience (though not, of course, for papists, Jews, idolaters and the like), all shew the influence of the political doctrine of power and the religious indifferentism of Hobbes on the mind of this very typical, practical and sober-minded Englishman. To Hobbes, Harrington in his 'Prerogative of a Popular Government,'<sup>1</sup> gives the high praise that 'I believe that Mr. Hobbes is, and in future ages will be accounted, the best writer in this day in the world.'

*The Rights and Duties of Sovereigns.*

The remorseless pen of Hobbes proceeds to sketch the three means by which civil society came into existence, for contract is not the only means. This last is termed institutional government, in which mild form all power is by agreement transferred to the sovereign, so that he may at will transfer his sovereignty or devize it to whomsoever he favours. There remain paternal government—all the *famuli* helping to compose the family as well as the children *sub manu patris*—and acquired government, by conquest. This last is far more absolute, since here the sovereign stands in the relation of a lord to his subjects and may sell their persons or buy them, like the Blue Guards of Frederick William I of Prussia.

This description might seem to bear the character of a comprehensive analysis of tyranny, but Hobbes is able, quite consistently with his scheme, to devote an entire chapter of his 'Leviathan'<sup>2</sup> to the duties of sovereigns, 'inasmuch as the profit of the sovereign and the subject are alike.' Having delivered himself of this *dictum*, so singularly sophistical in the age of the Secret Treaty of Dover, Hobbes remarks that a tyranny and a legitimate government are identical, for either a tyrant, if he has no right, is a public enemy or he is a King. 'Mildness and severity do not make two forms of government.' Hobbes may here merely be protesting against the abuse showered on an unpopular administration, such as Strafford's, but he judiciously refrains from defining what he means by a tyrant's so-called 'right.' If it be heredity, how then should Hobbes deny that there can be distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* rulers?

<sup>1</sup> I, § 8.

<sup>2</sup> E. III, § 30, cf. E. IV, 162, 213.

## ABSOLUTIST AND INDIVIDUALIST

### *Hobbes, Absolutist and Individualist.*

It was clearly not Hobbes' intention that the tyrant should be for ever exhibiting his muscle. 'Civil liberty,' he declares, 'is to make use of all things necessary for the preservation of life and health.'<sup>1</sup> This concession would logically ruin Hobbes' absolutism, but it is quite nugatory, since Hobbes does not allow men to combine to procure the means of health or even to have an absolute property of those means when procured, since 'they that have a lord over them have themselves no lordship.' He allows, however, that the over-restriction of liberty, as by arbitrary punishment, is provocative of sedition, while no more ought to be determined by law than the benefit of sovereign and subjects require. Liberty is the antithesis of law. Both extremes are faulty; for laws were not invented to take away but to direct men's actions, like the banks of a stream ordained not to stay but to guide its course.<sup>2</sup> Hobbes here shews himself, despite his state-worship, English and a true predecessor of Locke and of the English Utilitarian Individualists.<sup>3</sup>

It is most interesting to note the conditions under which Hobbes considers that allegiance is dissolved and complete liberty regained, since these shew how entirely he is pre-occupied with *de facto* government and how little he is able to establish any argument from force to right. The subject is freed if the Kingdom fall into the hands of an enemy, so that there is no more opposition,<sup>4</sup> the conqueror becoming, presumably, sovereign and God's lieutenant to the conquered, by force of acquisition. Also a sovereign may abdicate for himself and his heirs. But the fundamental rule is that the 'obligation of subjects to the sovereign is understood to last as long and no longer than the power lasteth by which he is able to protect them.' ('I cannot but place,' he confesses, 'sovereignty there where the power is.')

### *The Protests: Ross, Clarendon.*

Hobbes has performed the juggler's trick and accomplished the impossible: out of an aggregate of solitary and ravenous beasts he has formed a peaceful, obedient and

<sup>1</sup> E. II, 121.

<sup>2</sup> E. II, 178.

<sup>3</sup> Such as Prof. Croom Robertson.

<sup>4</sup> E. II, 107.

happy, if servile, society, enjoying that safety which he sanguinely describes as including 'all manner of benefits.' This feat of leger-de-main he accomplishes, however, at the cost of a sacrifice of instinctive loyalty which alienated the Royalists, of intellectual orthodoxy which stung the Universities, and of common morality which revolted the Churchmen. Amid numerous other writers, such as Lucy (writing under the *nom de plume* of 'William Pike,' 1658,) and A. Ross (Rossaeus, 1653), Clarendon delivered an ill-managed and ineffective attack in his 'Brief Survey of the dangerous and pernicious Errors to Church and State in Mr. Hobbes' book' (1674), while Tenison, the future Archbishop (+ 1715), wrote a not unwitty critique (1671) on the 'Creed of Mr. Hobbes.'

Ross, in his 'Leviathan Drawn out with a Hook' (1653), writing under the Commonwealth, and comparing himself to David assailing a braggart Goliath, is chiefly concerned to shew that every man is under duty to judge good and evil and that it is the contrary doctrine which is provocative of sedition. Clarendon writes (1674), more in sorrow than in anger, against the 'most mischievous parts, as to Civil Government,' and commends his erstwhile friend as a 'Man of excellent parts, of great wit, some reading and somewhat more thinking, ... a great Philosopher and Mathematician.' To this reputation the Leviathan owes its credit—the 'thorough novelty of which (to which novelty the present Age, if any, is too much inclined)' distresses his lordship. It is, indeed, 'writ in a vigorous and pleasant style which hath prevailed over too many.' The much provoked Bishop Bramhall is less charitable and less just: 'Hobbes' whole works are,' he declares, 'a heap of misshapen errors and absurd paradoxes, vented with the confidence of a juggler, the brags of a mountebank and the authority of some Pythagoras, or third Cato, lately dropped down from heaven.' Hobbes' manner, like Abelard's, was his undoing.

### *The Universities and the Royal Society.*

Through the schools where the young men congregated, —'whose minds are as white paper capable of any instruction,'—Hobbes hoped that godly doctrine might be instilled by the State. But, since Hobbes fully appreciated that

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education is the biasing of immature minds, it was a standing affront and the cause of all the present evils that the Universities were 'the core of rebellion,' the wooden horse of the British Troy, 'operatories of enchantments.' The feud with Seth Ward was in no small measure due to Ward's attack on Hobbes as an accomplice of J. Webster, the author of the searching '*Academiarum Examen*.' Hobbes replies in his writings on himself and on Wallis and, *inter alia*, in '*Behemoth*.'

At the ancient Universities, men nourished from infancy on the writings of the Greek and Latin authors contracted the habit of favouring tumults under a specious appearance of liberty.<sup>1</sup> Hobbes threatens that he will advise the establishment of a lay university, where there will be no Doctors of Divinity—it is quite possible,—and there is already Gresham College, London (closed 1767), and 'Mr. Hobbes will instruct the young men of Gresham College in mechanics, if they will ask him' and deal civilly with him. 'In the meantime Divinity may go on at Oxford and Cambridge to furnish the pulpit with men to cry down the civil power.'<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately Hobbes, running foul of the old, yet failed to make the haven of the new learning and, owing to the misliking of Wallis and Boyle, was never admitted a member of the newly incorporated 'Philosophical' or 'Royal Society' (1662 incorporated by Charles II; in embryo 1645). Charles II's scientific curiosity, almost the sole disinterested concern of that lackadaisical monarch, may, however, be traced with some probability to the fervour of his late mathematical tutor.

### *Hobbes as Theologian.*

It was not the Universities, however, it was the Church which constituted the great rock of offence to Hobbesian sovereignty, owing to ecclesiastical pretensions to a power of the Keys equal to that of the Sword. The face of '*Leviathan*'<sup>3</sup> may be the face of the first Charles, the voice

<sup>1</sup> L. W. III, 164. Hobbes, it must be admitted, is justified not only by Mediaeval example but especially, posthumously, in the French Revolution. Cf. C. Desmoulins:— 'Mes chers amis, puisque vous lisez Cicéron, je réponds de vous; vous serez libres,' (Rév. de Fr. et Br.) etc.

<sup>2</sup> E. VII, 345.

<sup>3</sup> On the frontispiece of '*Leviathan*.'



is the voice of the mighty lord, the eighth Henry. Even in such unpromising surroundings as the Introduction to 'Problemata Physica,' the statement 'Ecclesia Anglicana nihil aliud est quam populus tuus,' rears up its head to greet Charles II to whom the book is dedicated. So, in Hobbes' mathematical polemics, it is necessary to advert, along with the 'Rude Manners,' to the 'Scottish Church politics' of the unhappy Wallis. The subject even stirs Hobbes (probably in the year after the fateful 1667) to verse, nor that brief ('supra bismille versibus'). In this 'Historia Ecclesiastica' from Moses to Dr. Luther, after the horrid effects of ecclesiastical tyranny have been exposed, the Dante of the dialogue enquires:

'Scire velim fontem sceleratae qui fuit artis  
Primaque quae tantae fraudis origo fuit,'

whereupon his guiding Virgil informs him how:

'Deque Dei dicunt natura dogmata vana  
Pastores, populo non capienda rudi.'

Hobbes' own views on the Trinity were so latitudinarian that he was forced to modify the Latin edition of 'Leviathan' (1668) or, as Tenison complains, according to Mr. Hobbes there could have been 'more than 100 persons in the Deity.' The philosopher of Malmesbury is not, however, closely concerned with details: 'with the mysteries of our Religion it is as with wholesome pills for the sick, which swallowed whole have the virtue to cure but chewed are for the most part cast up without effect.'

These sage considerations, slightly blasphemously phrased, do not, however, occupy the major portion of his writings on ecclesiastical polity. Like Hooker, he is chiefly concerned in his section 'De Religione' of the 'De Cive' and in the sections 'Of the Christian Commonwealth' and 'Of the Kingdom of Darkness' of 'Leviathan,' as elsewhere, with the problem of government. There can be but one authority; 'if that were not, but Kings should command one thing upon pain of death and priests another upon pain of damnation, it would be impossible that peace and religion should stand together.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. IV, 199.



## ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY

### *Hobbes as Layman: Secularism.*

Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621) declares that the pagan Kings 'of their own accord underwent the laws of the gospel, presently being as sheep to a shepherd.'<sup>1</sup> Against this Hobbes protests. Non-Christian sovereigns had the names of Pastors of the People and 'this right of the heathen Kings is not supposed to be taken from them by their conversion to the Faith of Christ.' Hobbes, for one, is unwilling to call even a pagan King a heretic. 'Temporal and Spiritual Government are but two words brought into the world to make men see double and mistake their lawful sovereign.' There is, therefore, 'no other government in this life neither of State nor Religion but Temporal.' Christ, indeed, will have a Kingdom and that not metaphorical but actual and, indeed, in Palestine. It clearly, therefore, is not yet, and may safely be put off until the Resurrection Day. For the moment Spiritual Commonwealth there is none in this world. But were the Pope's supreme judgship in Faith and Morals admitted, it were as much as to acknowledge him as absolute Monarch of all Christians in the world. He is, indeed, as it is, the Power of the Air (the double meaning of 'anima' does not escape Hobbes) in the elf-realm, the hobgoblin-like 'Kingdom of Darkness.'

But if the Papacy offends by dividing—or monopolizing—sovereignty, Puritanism is perhaps worse in nourishing sedition. It appeals to the Scriptures against the Prince, forgetting that the Scripture itself was not received but by the authority of Kings and States.<sup>2</sup> The commands of Scripture have binding force owing to the civil law, and in Hobbes' writings the Decalogue reappears, for example, thus:—'Thou shalt not refuse to give the honour defined by the laws unto thy parents.' The Old Testament canon was determined by the High Priest as civil sovereign of the Jews; of the books of the New, till the civil power enforced a canon, 'every convert made them so' (canonical) 'himself.' After which bad history,<sup>3</sup> Hobbes proceeds to state that in matters of interpretation, as in the testing

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bellarmine: 'De Potestate Summi Pontificis.'

<sup>2</sup> E. VI, 230.

<sup>3</sup> The declaratory Councils of Carthage were not till after Constantine, but the statement in the text still holds.

of miracles, recourse is to be had to God's Lieutenant, 'to whom in all doubtful cases we have submitted our private judgments ..... For when Christian men take not their Christian sovereign for God's prophet, they must either take their own dreams ..... or be led away by some foreign prince or a fellow subject.'

*Prophesyings: Hobbes and the Varieties of Religious Experience.*

Hobbes has, however, to face the difficulty of direct interpretations of Scripture by revelation. As Bishop Bramhall complains, 'he maketh very little difference between a prophet and a madman and a demoniac.' Indeed, Hobbes denies that the gift of prophecy remained after St. John the Evangelist. Hobbes in fact had, perhaps justly, very little respect for modern prophets: 'every boy or wench thought that he spoke with God Almighty.' He puts down some remarks on one, not indeed a prophetess but a devout woman, and shews that he has his own ideas. 'Nor,' he writes to a friend, 'do I much wonder that a young woman of clear memory, hourly expecting death, should bee more devout then at other times. 'Twas my own case.'<sup>1</sup> How then should a King be judged by a prophet, 'for he whose nonsense appears a divine speech, must necessarily seem to be inspired from above.'

*Conscientious Objectors: Hobbes as Casuist.*

But it was even more blasphemous to judge a ruler to be wicked by some private ruling of conscience. The 'tender conscience' appeared to Hobbes to be anarchy tempered by revelation. When revelations were being received as to the payment of taxes or as to the direction of the Army, when Ireton and Cromwell could cry a halt, it was surely permissible for Hobbes to do so. This conscientious claim springs from not knowing what and by whom God Almighty speaks. 'Hast thou eaten of the tree to know good and evil?'—the unfortunate fact that Adam had, Hobbes conveniently ignoring. The conscientious objector had, indeed; not much ground to stand on. The King is the exponent of *ius naturale*; he only makes Scripture law and he only

<sup>1</sup> E. VII, 464.

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has the interpretation of it. If, however, the objector gallantly persists and blindly trusts to that transcendental moral law which by Hobbes' metaphysics can never exist, he is met by the rebuke that 'Christians (or men of what Religion soever), if they tolerate not their King, whatsoever law he maketh, though it be concerning religion, do violate their faith, contrary to the Divine law both natural and positive,' and are thus deep in sin and on the road to damnation. It is indeed dangerous to have a conscience.

### *Hobbes and Faith.*

What, then, must a man have done to be saved? All that is necessary to salvation is faith in Christ and obedience to the laws. From this maxim of good citizenship, one proceeds to an analysis of faith in Christ. This, again, is obedience to the civil laws (which He obeyed under Augustus) together with a confession that Jesus is Christ. This is the baptismal confession. What else can be necessary?

Hobbes is now in a position to rend all his opponents. The passive resister is told that he is not so conscientious that he will spontaneously render himself up to authority and yet, if he do not so, he is in sin. Treason is perpetual sin, and even passive resistance is sin. Moreover, the sinner offends not against the civil law, since clearly a positive law, 'thou shalt not rebel,' would be futile, but against the natural law which obliges us to observe the rules of the society into which we have entered. The opinion that every man is a judge of good and evil actions is a cause of the decay of the commonwealth.

### *The Ministers of the Word: their Status.*

On the other hand he boasts that the authority of all General Councils is, by his doctrine, destroyed. And although he protests in his treatise concerning his Reputation that there is nothing in the 'Leviathan' against Episcopacy, the Church by law established by no means escapes scot-free. Hobbes professes a respect for Laud as a man, though he scarce thinks his claims to be a statesman serious. But few things can be less Laudian than Hobbes' statement that the clergy have only a teaching authority as ministers of the Crown and may not have even that, 'for neither is a

clergy essential to a commonwealth.' 'There is no nation in the world whose religion is not established and receives its authority from the laws of that nation.' Although such as Hercules, whom Hobbes terms, with scant reverence, a 'mongrel god,' might walk abroad, the gods of the heathen, even, could not be lawfully impersonated till the civil state arose. Thus the Paphian authorities would, it seems, supply a licensed model for the form of the sea-born Aphrodite.

*Hobbes and the Early Christians.*

One is content to learn, from this true Elizabethan, that Constantine 'had for his end, in the calling of the Synod' (of Nicaea) 'not so much the truth, as the uniformity of the doctrine, and peace of his people that depended on it.'<sup>1</sup> But here arises a difficulty. What was the dutiful conduct of the Christian before Constantine? Hobbes has a ready answer. 'When St. Paul and St. Peter commanded the Christians of their time to obey their princes, which were then heathens and enemies of Christ, did they mean that they should lose their lives for disobedience? Did they not rather mean that they should preserve both their lives and their faith, believing in Christ, as they did, by this denial of the tongue, having no commandment to the contrary' (for 'a word is but a gesture of the tongue')? But this comfortable doctrine of living to fight another day is not for all. Hobbes does not deny that the heathen civil law may be contrary to the divine law and admits (perhaps inconsistently) that he who acts against his conscience sins, even though it be an erroneous conscience.<sup>2</sup> For the priesthood therefore to apostatize, who have specially undertaken the preaching of Christ, Hobbes holds, with gentle irony, to be shameful; they are indeed paid to undergo martyrdom. Such hard things are, however, not for the simple man, who may confidently trust his prince, for obedience is never contrary to conscience.

<sup>1</sup> E. IV, 393.

<sup>2</sup> E. IV, 376. The admission is guarded. 'It is plain, that to do what he thinks in his own conscience to be sin, is sin; for it is a contempt of the law itself; and from thence ignorant men, out of an erroneous conscience, disobey the law, which is pernicious to all government,' *i.e.* only the will to break 'the law' is sin. One recalls the utterance of the Girondin 'Patriot,' Isnard: 'My God is the Law: I have no other.'

## SOVEREIGNTY AND CONSCIENCE

### *Hobbes and Proof Texts.*

To Hobbes is largely due the abandonment, in arguments other than religious, of proof texts, the use of which, though Sydney employed them, Locke foregoes. Hobbes proved so effectually that the devil could quote the Bible that divines and philosophers became chary of greeting each other on non-Biblical subjects with an opening fusillade of texts. Hobbes desires to prove the absolute power of the sovereign. What better instance than David sending Uriah to his death? And yet did David act unjustly to Uriah? Not at all, for David says, 'Against Thee only have I sinned, O Lord' (Ps. li, 4). The effect is produced, irrevelancy apart, by the suitable omission of the un-Hobbist episode of Nathan.

In this matter of sovereignty and conscience, Hobbes is especially interested in the relevant case of Naaman, for was he not permitted to bow himself in the House of Rimmon? Naaman is a Hobbist saint. Surely the simple Christian may be permitted to imitate the pious Naaman, whom such a jealous prophet as Elisha approved. After all, to obey is one thing and to believe is another, and the law only requires obedience. 'If he, that commands me to do that which is sin, is right lord over me, I sin not.'

And, if men are so trustful as to believe what authority teaches, it is the more virtuous. If authorities differ on matters that are *de fide*, then those who are wrong 'must lie in their sins and be damned.' At least they have the satisfaction of knowing that the sovereign, too, has risked his eternal life—unless they have the misfortune not to have an individual monarch as sovereign. But the difference will probably be on non-essentials, and then 'all is well except that they will perhaps call each other atheists and fight about it.'

### *Hobbes and the Foundations of Religious Belief.*

It remains to remark, before turning full circle in Hobbes' system, his observations on the anthropological foundations of religious belief. 'In these four things, opinion of ghosts' (Animism), 'ignorance of second causes' (Shamanism), 'devotion to what men fear' (Panic worship), 'and taking



things for prognostics' (Augury), 'consisteth the natural seed of religion.' 'Superstition proceedeth from fear without right reason and atheism from an opinion of reason without fear.'

*Denunciations: Tenison, Lawson.*

Hobbes' ecclesiastical and theological doctrines were at least provocative. The Catholic was not likely to agree that a Christian King, though yet unbaptised (as Constantine), cannot be less a divine despot than the heathen Kings of old, cannot be less bishop or Pontifex Maximus or even Divus Augustus; clergy of the Established Church would not appreciate the assimilation of their power to that of a parish constable; Puritans would not allow, in the Hobbesian manner, that 'the civil law is the publique conscience.' A storm of protest burst forth, mounted, as has been already said, to the House of Commons, blackened to fulminate an Act against blasphemous literature, the 'Leviathan' being marked for destruction, and then—disappeared in vapour. But theological writers from Baxter to Clarke continue to make Hobbes a stock subject for criticism, till his name becomes in a more comfortable age a distant rumour, told of privily.<sup>1</sup> The ground of the case against

\* Cf. Locke: 'Hobbes and Spinoza, those justly censured names.' The fate of Hobbes' most famous book, the 'Leviathan,' is noteworthy. Published in England in 1651, the bishops prevented a reprint in 1668 in this country. Thus Pepys had to pay 24s. for a second-hand copy, there being so great a demand for a book which a little while before would only have fetched 8s. Published in this year in Latin in Amsterdam, it was not republished in England till Blackbourne's edition of 1750. In October, 1666, it was censured by Parliament along with a Papistical book by one White: it had already in June, 1654, been put on the Papal Index. In 1683 it was forbidden to be read in the University of Oxford and condemned by the Venerable Convocation to be burned *infami manu* (Acta Convocationis, 1683, pp. 376-9), along with certain works of Cardinal Bellarmine and of Messrs. Baxter and Milton. In 1730 it was recommended for reading, in connection with the study of the Moral Sciences, by the University of Cambridge. It is worthy of note that Molesworth's edition (1839) of the collected works is dedicated to G. Grote, who was keenly interested in Hobbes' philosophy. This unruffled interest is very far removed from the almost incoherent indignation of the XVIIth century, when books were published, entitled, for example, 'The true effigies of the Monster of Malmesbury: or T. Hobbes in his popular colours (Mr. Cowley's verses in praise of Mr. Hobbes oppos'd). By a lover of truth and virtue' (1680).

## DENUNCIATIONS AND APPRECIATIONS

him is put by Tenison, in his summary of the Hobbist's Creed :—

‘ I believe that God is Almighty matter ; . . .  
that it is to be  
decided by the Civil Power whether He created  
all things else ;  
. . . that the prime law of Nature in the Soul  
of Man is  
temporal Self-Love ; . . . that whatsoever is written  
in these books’  
(of Scripture) ‘ may lawfully be denied even  
upon Oath (after the  
laudable doctrine of the Gnosticks) in times  
of Persecution.’<sup>1</sup>

The general judgment is summed up by Hobbes' very sober critic Lawson :—‘ Mr. Hobbes in the former part seemed to have had some use of his Reason but in this’ (on the ‘ Christian commonwealth’) ‘ he is like unto such as are lunatick, though he hath lucid intervals’ . . . ‘ He hath turned the Pope out of his infallible Chair and transformed sovereign Civil Princes and Rulers into Popes.’<sup>2</sup>

### *Appreciations : Ford, Faulkner.*

The influence of Hobbes' doctrine, however, so far as it ran with the general current, was noticeable even in his life-time. S. Ford (1660) declares that the sovereign authority of the people and the natural liberty of free-born fellow creatures was ‘ cant, the cant of our time,’ while, in the year of Hobbes' death (1679), Faulkner, in his ‘ Christian Loyalty,’ lays down that ‘ men may not safely be left to the sole conduct of their consciences,’ rather should men be subject for conscience sake. Harrington, even, coquets with this notion of a public conscience.

<sup>1</sup> ‘ Creed of Mr. Hobbes examined,’ p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> ‘ Examination,’ p. 156. Hobbes is, indeed, the exponent of that doctrine of the ‘ divine state’ which, though never quite forgotten, even when the altars of *Romae et Divi Augusti* were overthrown, returned surreptitiously with the XVth century and has been growing less personal and naïve but perhaps more strong and subtle ever since.

*Review and Conclusion: Hobbes' influence abroad.*

Hobbes most abiding influence is by reason of his political philosophy.<sup>1</sup> This is complicated by attempts in two instances to bring an abstract logical system into harmony with the dominant beliefs of the day. On the point of current orthodoxy, to which Hobbes gauchely and at intervals strives to pay some homage, it is difficult to see how a system, which it requires charity not to term atheistic, can be reconciled with an acknowledgment of the positive authority of Christ. This authority (though illogically, after Pilate's disapproval) Hobbes is not hardy enough to controvert but relegates to a convenient Kingdom-come. On the point of royalism, Hobbes' elevation of disloyalty into a sin, when it is merely (by his own system) a calculation of self-interest—only incorrect if the sovereign is culpably failing in 'frightfulness'—is merely a concession to Cavalier sentiment and political expediency.

As a whole, however, Hobbes, in his doctrine of the state, is marvellously cogent. His teaching is no mere Cavalier doctrine: he admits the popular origin of government: he has little use for a divine right of Kings. In his secular view of the state he follows in the train of Luther, who, appealing to his 'godly princes,' dealt a death blow to the declining belief in a *respublica christiana*, and of Machiavelli,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. R. Gadave (Th. Hobbes et ses Théories du Contrat Social, 1907) claims Hobbes as the father of Sociologists and of the science of Societies, in view of his statement that Politics 'consisteth in certain rules, as doth Arithmetique and Geometry, not (as Tennis-play) in practise onely.' Hobbes certainly, so far as he can be said to have divided abstractly Law and Ethics, contributed to the planting of an independent science of Politics as, perchance, by practical deductions from that division, he did much to pervert what was planted. The writings of the geometricians, he firmly believed, had increased science, those of the ethical philosophers, words only (E. I, 9). But his mathematical dialectic is one of the dead things in Hobbes and to cite this as Hobbes' contribution to sociology seems to risk taking its name in vain. M. Gadave will also have (p. 257) Hobbes to be 'un amoureux de la paix.' Like all doctrines which aim at social security, Hobbes' theories logically ended in cosmopolitanism, but it may be confidently asserted that he did not see this, though the vision was clear enough to predecessors such as Dante. Of course in the narrower domestic sphere, without doubt he was a lover of police,—not quite the same thing. M. Gadave's book contains an excellent bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> Any direct nexus would seem to be difficult to prove. A refutation of Machiavelli by Gentillet was translated into English, as a 'Discourse upon the Meanes of Wel Governing,' by Simon Patarick, in 1577. The refuted work ('The Prince') was first translated in 1640 (*cf.* 'Fortnightly Review,' Jan. 1921, art. by M. B. Whiting). But Hobbes was, of course, well acquainted with Florence itself, where he seems later to have been appreciated. In 1669, its prince, Cosimo III, insisted on taking back from England, as treasures for the Medicean Library, a portrait of Hobbes and the collected works of this novel exponent of the doctrine of 'Keep troth sometimes.'

## THAT MORTAL GOD, LEVIATHAN

with his separation of state-ethics from individual-ethics. But whereas the German Protestants accepted '*cuius regio*' as a compromise, Hobbes made of it a principle, and whereas Machiavelli but prescribed practical maxims of statecraft, Hobbes is concerned with a theory of state expediency as the Urim and Thummim of conduct.

In this State, Borgian and infallible, no authority may be tolerated save its own. All other societies are amiably compared to worms in the intestines of the body politic: the Church is a mere Ministry of Civics and Ethics, its officials sworn in on a theological formula. Sovereignty<sup>1</sup> is the centripetal force in the political cosmology, but it must be confessed that Hobbes never satisfactorily harnesses the centrifugal force, supplied by his individualistic ethics. He can never finally answer the charge of his assailants that the appeal to self-interest is the seed of sedition.

<sup>1</sup> Despite the exaggerations of Austin, on the one hand, and the reaction of the Bordeaux School, on the other, within its own limits the value of Hobbes' statement of the Doctrine of Sovereignty cannot be over-emphasized. As Sir F. Pollock (Intro. to the History of Political Science, p. 65) says: 'Right or wrong, in the legal sense, are that which the law of the State allows or forbids, and nothing else . . . it is Hobbes' great merit to have made this clear beyond the possibility of misunderstanding,' while such an acknowledged leader of the Juristic School as Professor G. Jellinek (System des öff. subj. Rechts, p. 32) declares that Hobbes has enunciated a doctrine of the juristic personality of the State to which the modern theory of Public Right has nothing to add. It is when thinkers stray beyond 'the legal sense' and the juristic State and endeavour to apply the Hobbesian Theory of Sovereignty within what Professor Dicey chose to distinguish (Dicey: Law of the Constitution, p. 70) as the 'political' sphere, and to the 'Great Society,' that it becomes a fruitful source of dubious doctrine (*vide supra* p. 41). Hobbes, by first separating private Ethics and Politics (although there is a fundamental identity of principle in *his* Ethics and *his* Politics, *vide* pp. 32, 37, 61; both are schemes of conciliating self-interest and security) and by then making legality the criterion of morality, in effect places Law in a position of superiority to Ethics. Thus his doctrine of Sovereignty has neither the ideal checks of the Scholastics nor, on the other hand, has it the practical checks inherent in Spinoza's system (*cf.* T. H. Green: Principles of Political Obligation, p. 64—5). It is impossible to discuss here the immense question of the ultimate validity and categorically imperative power of a subjective as opposed to a social system of Ethics, the problem really raised here by Hobbes. As between diverse social systems, Hobbes is emphatically of the opinion that the English State and not the Christian Church must decide weighty ethical disputes. The ancient Christian dualism of the spheres of Spiritual and Secular is abolished. What, however, has not always been adequately appreciated by Hobbes' censors is that he, with Jean Bodin, is responsible for rescuing the theory of Sovereignty from the nebulous transcendentalism or subjectivism of the Classical, Patristic and Scholastic thinkers, save so far as these last took refuge in high Papalism. Further, as M. Gadave (*op. cit.* p. 260) points out, unlike Bodin, 'Hobbes fut à la fois juriste et philosophe.' And, lastly, Hobbes' doctrine is not to be understood as an abrogation of the Laws of Nature, for which, as against ecclesiastical regimentation, he had a lively attachment. Rather he would clip their wings and claws and render them serviceable choristers of Monarchy, give to them a Sovereign Interpreter and to the Sovereign them as philosophic monitors.



## THOMAS HOBBES

### *Spinoza and Pufendorf.*

Hobbes' doctrine of the state, supplemented by a saner ethics, is taken over by a yet greater philosopher, his disciple Benedict de Spinoza, whose 'Tractatus Theologico-Politicus' (1670) Hobbes declared had outdistanced him 'a bar's length.'<sup>1</sup> This tractate and its author, with his thesis (§ 16) that no pact is kept save for hope of good or fear of evil, are rightly associated by Sharrock with the theories of Hobbes, while Samuel Pufendorf is also singled out as under this influence.<sup>2</sup> So, too, the unfinished 'Tractatus Politicus' (1677) shews the influence of Hobbes. But Spinoza, with a consistent and philosophic theory of sovereignty so emphatic that he declares that to the *salus populi* 'all laws both divine and human must bend,' yet alters the entire complexion of his argument by insisting on the duty of toleration. It may be argued that Hobbes had shown him the way. The duty, '*non habebis deos alienos*,' is a favourite theme with Hobbes, but he elsewhere demands, 'what man is he that will trouble himself and fall out with his neighbours for the sake of saving my soul or the soul of any other than himself?' From which it may be concluded that Hobbes had no conscientious objection to tolerance. But the fact remains that, whether from lack of courage or of conviction, the idea remains in Hobbes undeveloped.

It is attractive to trace the mathematicism of Spinoza to Hobbes, but it is perhaps safer to attribute it to the interests of the age: even the Cambridge Platonists, with their search after a mathematically certain truth, in their 'Intellectual Systems' and 'Eternal Moralities,' are under the same influence. But it is to Hobbes' credit that he never permits

<sup>1</sup> Spinoza differentiates his doctrine from Hobbes on the ground that, unlike the latter, he preserves Natural Law even in the civil community and rests the authority of the State solely on its power to secure obedience (Theol. pol. § vi. 4). This differentiation, however, seems rather unhappy in view of Hobbes' reservations in civil society against conscription and as to a father or brother being compelled to accuse his own family and his identification of *de jure* with *de facto* authority. Rather the difference lies, in spirit if not in word, in the ethical theories of the two men; a difference which does not fail to react on their political attitude. Hobbes subordinates the individual to the resistless divine state; Spinoza elevates the individual to a sphere so lofty, finding immortality in the knowledge of a moral absolute, as to be able to condemn, while bending before, the unjust actions of a State based on force.

<sup>2</sup> Hobbes was one of the philosophers on whom Pufendorf, we are told, meditated during his captivity at Copenhagen.



## SPINOZA AND LEIBNITZ

himself, as a philosopher, to play the Spencer to Galileo's or any other mathematician's Darwin, to be merely the philosophic underwriter to another man with original scientific ideas.<sup>1</sup> His philosophy, which even in its error is luminous in its consistency—a lurid exposure when not a brilliant exposition—is peculiarly his own, the fruit of meditation on the problems of his age, not of plagiarism of its writers.

### *Descartes and Leibnitz.*

His permanent literary association with Descartes as the author of the 'Third Objections' to the 'Meditations,' has already been noticed; his subtlety and spirit, the sensationism and contempt for Universal Ideas of this 'more than Nominalist,' impressed Leibnitz.<sup>2</sup> His memory, kept alive by Bayle<sup>3</sup> in a France more under the influence of English philosophers than England itself, was restored<sup>4</sup> by Diderot and Holbach, and thus influenced, in thought and method, Rousseau, that strange disseminator in prize essays of the Philosophy of Ignorance and reconciler of Liberty and Sovereignty through compulsion to be free. Kant also found it requisite to devote a section of one of his books on Liberty to a polemic headed 'Against Hobbes.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is yet noteworthy that Hobbes copied and collected literary productions by Galileo (C. Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 35, n. 1).

<sup>2</sup> To Leibnitz he was 'a prince of the new philosophic age' and 'ipsis nominalibus nominalior.' It is still customary to assert that Hobbes was a Nominalist, nor can this statement well be challenged as touching his theory of ideas and the nominalistic outlook may also be detected in his individualistic treatment of ethics and politics. On the other hand, Hobbes appears constantly to treat the 'laws of nature,' of motion and impact, as being exemplified *in re* and even, in the case of individual phenomena, as conditioning their existence and being *ante rem*. Cf. his statement (Elem. Phil. de Corp. vii):—'Doctrinae naturalis exordium a ficta universi sublatione capiemus; supposita tota rerum annihilatione dico remansuras mundi et corporum ideas.' If he was then in his logical exposition a Nominalist, it may be urged that he tended (like many of his successors) to be, even unwittingly, a mathematical Realist. But even here he is by no means consistent (C. Robertson: *op. cit.* p. 108). The secret seems to be that Hobbes can never quite reconcile his empirical materialistic beliefs with his *a priori* logical methods; he would prove crude materialism by pure reason and is consequently caught in the contradictions which are inherent in all materialistic systems of the first blench (Cf. Lyon: La Philosophie de Hobbes, 1893, p. 118, also § iii).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. art. in 'Dictionary.'

<sup>4</sup> It would be an interesting point of research to discover what influence this father of Positivists had on the generous soul of A. Comte, who styles Hobbes 'the true father of revolutionary philosophy.'

<sup>5</sup> Theory and Practice, § ii, Against Hobbes, 1793.

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It would be fantastic perhaps to see a connection between that Leviathan, of which it is said that '*non est super terram quae comparetur ei*,' and that 'Divine Idea actually existent on earth,' which also logically ended, though less brutally, through its identification of the total of actuality with the ideal, in a doctrine of Might. But Hobbes' state is far too little ideal, too external, coercive and utilitarian, to be compared fitly to Hegel's.<sup>1</sup>

### *Hobbes' influence at Home.*

In England, in many ways, Hobbes' influence is smaller than on the continent. The road is blocked by the reaction of John Locke, followed by the quite alien thought of Shaftesbury, Butler and Berkeley.

### *The Deists: Lord Herbert.*

Could one be sure that Hobbes' words are the honest disclosures of his thought and not a cloak of guile to shroud them, it would be safe, while admitting that his system could give no legitimate excuse for the rise of Christianity, to account him, as does Sir L. Stephen, a theist. If so, he would be, along with an acquaintance, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648), the founder of the English school of Deists. But it seems perhaps unfair to the altruistic author of 'De Virtute' to give him so dubious an associate.

Hobbes was not—save with a few learned friends who appreciated his personal merits, or with lax society dandies who are reported to have reproduced *dissecta membra* of the works of this 'witty man' at their smart dinner parties—*persona grata* in England. Stuart loyalists surreptitiously made use of his doctrine of absolute obedience and the abnegation of conscience; Whig politicians stole his theory of *de facto* government, that authority 'is to trump in card playing, save that when nothing else turns up clubs are trumps.' But neither side, and few writers save Harrington and Warburton, made acknowledgment to the contaminating 'atheist of Malmesbury.'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the monograph of Professor A. E. Taylor: 'Hobbes', p. 126.

## LOCKE AND MILL

### *Mandeville.*

Hobbes was frankly unpopular<sup>1</sup> and the undoubted parenthood of his doctrine to Mandeville's scandalous 'Fable of the Bees,' did but serve to fasten the label 'Epicurean' on to him more securely and to damn his memory the more certainly to a hell which, at least in England, was to be a shuddering oblivion. The Church had no use for him; the Guelph Kings, their *de facto* sovereignty acknowledged, had no longer a use for him; he was disreputable, an abomination.

### *John Locke.*

Locke, himself rather under Cartesian influence, did but rescue a few fragments to make a bonfire for Whig philosophers. Hobbes' social contract had been a fancy; Locke's revision was a dogma, promulgated in the interests of the sacred Rights of Property. Hobbes had purposely confounded sovereign and executive; Locke exposed the fraud. Hobbes had laid, indeed, with wonderful confidence, more perhaps against Church than against Commons, his doctrine of sovereignty. Like Spinoza, Hobbes could have said outright, 'the right of the sovereign extends as far as he can secure obedience.' But Hobbes had thought fit to answer those who urged the threat of sovereignty by the alarm of anarchy, preferred to talk of an abstract, extrinsically unlimited sovereignty. He was afraid of the bogey of his own ethics, could not be free with his own doctrine, feared to define the limits of sovereignty, as something legal not political. He thus left, in his turn, a ghost for a thing. But Locke, like Montesquieu, neither perceived the true cause of the fallacy nor yet the great and essential truth of the theory, and struggled on, hampered by 'checks and balances.'

### *Austin and James Mill.*

Hobbes had said, 'though the whole world build their house on the sand, it does not follow that it is right to do so,' and he was justified. Lockeianism fell, and Hobbes was revived, with his errors as well, in abstract theory, by

<sup>1</sup> Compare with the text, Buckle: *Hist. of Civilization in Eng.* i, 390:—'During his life and for several years after his death, every man who ventured to think for himself was stigmatized as a Hobbeist or, as it was sometimes called, a Hobbian.' Any genuine connection of thought was not so common, at least in England, but it should be added that Hobbes is said to have had a certain following among the University dons.

the lawyerly Austin, in utilitarian practice, by J. Bentham, that eccentric father of the Philosophy of Common-sense. Indeed Hobbes foreshadows and is in a manner the forerunner of that lower Utilitarianism, from which J. S. Mill endeavoured to dissociate himself. To the Utilitarians, moreover, especially Jas. Mill, was due Hobbes' resuscitation as a psychologist.

*Hobbes as Philosopher and Writer.*

If, as Eachard comments, 'human nature is not so very vile and rascally as he writes his own to be,'<sup>1</sup> yet it may be suspected that this rarely energetic and pugnacious old man, who fought all comers till his ninety-second year, who, when in 1647—8 he imagined himself to be on his death-bed, dismissed priestly consolation with the words, 'let me alone or I will detect all your cheats from Aaron to yourselves,' who forced Bishop Cosin of Durham to recite prayers over him strictly as prescribed by law, was yet not such a ravaging wolf as he represented himself to be. There is a note of robust optimism in his declaration: 'Reason is the pace, increase of science the way; and the benefit of mankind the end.' Perhaps those of his contemporaries who declined to take his fire-eating seriously, were wisest. Although he protests that his style is the worse because he consulted more with logic than with rhetoric, yet his rancours, the 'passion and impertinent noise' of which Tenison complains, the excessive cynicism which is almost burlesque, mar his value as a philosopher,—perhaps the most voluminous philosopher in the language.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> M. G. Lyon (*La Phil. de Hobbes*, 1893, p. 218) remarks: 'il est le métaphysicien de la moderne Angleterre; il est presque le seul.' It is well to see ourselves as other see (or saw) us! But M. Lyon is referring technically to the *a priori* thinker. The conclusion reached in M. Damiron's short but still valuable sketch (*Mémoire sur Hobbes*, p. 311, *Mém. de l'Acad. roy. des sciences morales et politiques*, III, 1841) is perhaps better weighed: 'excellent penseur, faux docteur; tel est, en effet, Hobbes tout entier.' M. Damiron is of the ingenious opinion that Hobbes took to writing too late in life, with the result that the cold judgment of the calculating brain predominated too much in his philosophy over the warmer sentiments of the heart. It might, perchance with equal appropriateness, be added that Hobbes remained a bachelor—although, indeed, the blandly malign Bishop Kennet (*Wood: Athenae Oxonienses*, edit. Bliss, III, col. 1218, note) tells of a natural daughter, 'whom he called his *Delictum Juventutis* and provided for her.' The statement is uncorroborated.



## HOBBS AND NIETZCHE

But Hobbes' fame as a writer, though chiefly, is far from entirely that of a philosopher. Besides the pungency of his ideas, besides the systematic ruthlessness of his method, there is a terse exactitude and simplicity of style, a power of draughtmanship, that makes him one of the masters of the English language, along with Bacon and Hume, and his 'Leviathan,' for good or evil, a work of genius. For Buckle he is 'the subtlest dialectician of his time; a writer of singular clearness:' for Macaulay, his language is 'more precise and luminous than has ever been employed by any other metaphysical writer'. The verdict and prophecy of Harrington has been fully justified.

### *The Two Ishmaels.*

For equal 'provocation-value' in their respective societies, for spiritual akinship in power of thought and language, in a certain absence of terminological abstruseness, in religious irreverence and moral overturning, it is impossible not to compare Thomas Hobbes with Friedrich Nietzsche.<sup>1</sup> The one is indeed in revolt from the Aristotelianism of the Schools and the Ciceronianism of the Renaissance, yet Roman in his conception; the other, on the contrary, in revolt back to the Classical ages and, perchance, the Greek ideal. The one is of his own age mathematical; the other of his age biological. Each is an individualist; but the one deplores the effect of an unrestrained individualism among the Many, the other applauds its luxuriant growth among the Few. But both are outlaws in thought; both are

<sup>1</sup> The comparison must not be pressed too far. The writings of both Hobbes and of Nietzsche are full of pithy fallacies and pungent truths. Both writers rejoice to bring to light life's scandalous things, judge pessimism to be the guarantee of veracity in estimating human nature and consider unpleasantness and frankness to be convertible terms. But whereas the philosophy of Might and Fight has the virtue of being affirmative and even constructive by making of 'Over-passing' and of Destruction itself ethical principles, the philosophy of Force and Fear can only harness naïve selfishness by the pretence that morality is the best means to the several hedonistic ends of individuals (Cf. Hobbes' 'Leviathan,' edit. Everyman, p. xvii of the Introd. by Mr. A. D. Lindsay, Fellow of Balliol College, to whom I am indebted elsewhere in this study for advice). Hobbes purports to make a 'realistic' observation of human nature and concludes (with the Devil) 'skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life'; Nietzsche sets a fearless ideal before man and concludes (in like company) that

"Alle Näh' und alle Ferne  
Befriedigt nicht die tiefbewegte Brust."



## THOMAS HOBBS

masters of apothegm, princes in letters. Both are rival in their time for the encomium which Gibbon applied to the Frenchman Gassendi:—‘c’est le meilleur philosophe de littérateurs et le meilleur littérateur des philosophes.’

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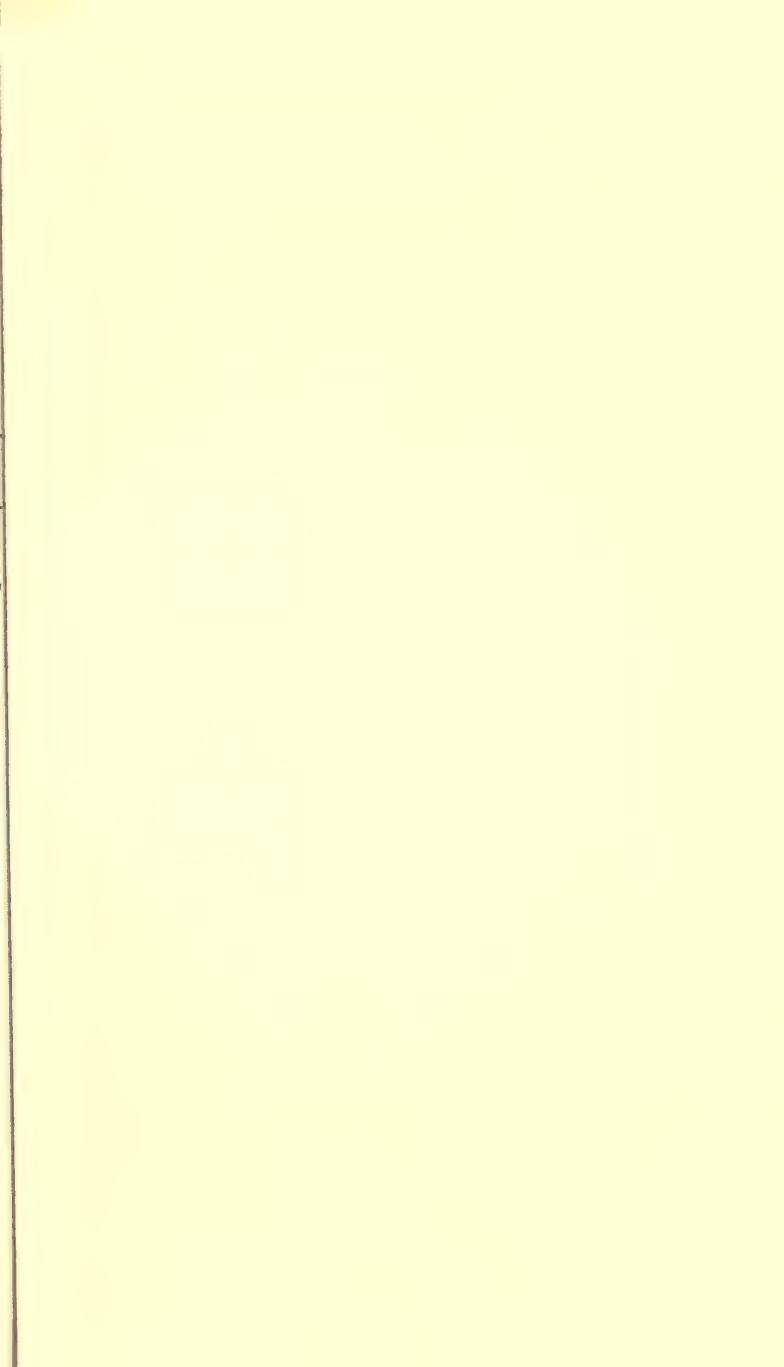
### ERRATA.

*Page 10, line 4: for ‘the first Cavendish Earl’ read ‘Baron Cavendish of Hardwicke, later (1615-26) first Earl.’*

*Page 24, line 6: for ‘Boilleau’ read ‘the French astronome Boulliau.’*

*Page 40, line 4: for ‘Manegold of Lauterbach’ read ‘Manegold of Lautenbach.’*

*Page 42, line 6: for ‘ὑψίποδας δι’ αἰθέρα’ read ‘ὑψίποδας δι’ αἰθέρα τεκνωθέντας.’*





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